

INTRODUCTION

1. On 17th December 1979, in a written answer to a question on the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education's 'A Strategy for the Basic Education of Adults' and the future of the Adult Literacy Unit, the Secretary of State for Education and Science made the following statement:

'I have, in consultation with my Right Hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Wales, been considering carefully the recommendations of the first annual report of the Adult Literacy Unit, which was set up under the aegis of the National Institute of Adult Education to provide a focus for work in literacy. I have also looked closely at the recommendations of the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education. The Council was commissioned to report on the best way of building on the adult literacy campaign in order to create and implement a coherent strategy for the basic education of adults, including continued provision for adult literacy. I have concluded that the Adult Literacy Unit has done valuable work in stimulating and supporting developments in adult literacy and that the need for some central support for innovative work in this field has by no means ceased.

I also recognise the need for provision to continue to be made locally for the wide range of skills and knowledge, identified in the Council's report, without which it is difficult for people to play a proper part in society generally and in the community in which they live. The speed and nature of its development and the priority accorded to it is, however, a matter which must be determined mainly in the light of local needs and resources.

There is a need for some co-ordination of the support made available by central departments and agencies for work locally in this field, in order to secure the effective deployment of resources, but I do not feel that it is necessary to establish for this purpose the autonomous and separate development board recommended by the Council. Avenues of communication already exist between these bodies which can be more appropriately built upon.

I am not able to provide central support to encourage, focus and guide development across the whole field described in the Council's report. I attach particular priority rather to work designed to improve the standards of adult proficiency in those basic skills, in areas such as literacy, numeracy, communication and coping, for those for whom English is a first or second language, without which people are impeded from applying or being considered for employment. Since work of this type arises from and complements the provision made for literacy, which will continue to play a central role, I consider it appropriate to build on the expertise of the Adult Literacy Unit by developing from that core, again within the National Institute of Adult Education, a unit with a wider remit, covering not only literacy but the other related basic skills.

I am pleased to announce that outline agreement has been reached with the local authority associations and NIAE for the development of such a unit.

This will not only act as a focus for work in adult literacy and other basic skills, providing guidance materials and some help in training staff, but will also continue to be able to commission special projects in the local authority sector and to assist some innovatory work by voluntary bodies engaged in this area. As a general principle, however, I would expect local voluntary organisations to look to local sources of finance for support.

I expect this literacy and basic skills unit to function in the first instance for three years, after which its future will be reviewed in the light of identified needs and available resources. Subject to parliamentary approval, the Government plan to make funds of about £½ million available to the unit in its first year, sufficient to continue support for adult literacy at broadly the present level and to begin to support work in the wider range of associated basic skills. The balance and level of funding for the following two years will be settled later.'

2. The Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit, an agency of the National Institute of Adult Education, was established by the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office on 1st April 1980, to act as a central focus for adult literacy and related basic skills work in England and Wales.

3. The Unit has been established initially for a three year period and administers a grant from the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office for:

'developing within the general education service in England and Wales provision designed to improve the standards of proficiency for adults, whose first or second language is English, in the areas of literacy and numeracy, and those related basic communication and coping skills, without which people are impeded from applying or being considered for employment.'

4. The Unit's main functions are:

- to offer an advisory and consultancy service to LEAs and voluntary bodies
- to publish relevant teaching and learning materials
- to co-ordinate provision and, where appropriate, directly provide training additional to that provided by LEAs
- to undertake, by means of the direct employment and assignment of staff or otherwise, development projects in collaboration with LEAs and other relevant statutory or voluntary bodies, subject to the provision being additional to that planned by the relevant LEA, or LEAs, and to that LEA or LEAs agreeing, where relevant, to assume full responsibility for the provision or its continuation in appropriate form after funding by ALBSU ceases.

PART I: ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS PROVISION IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Introduction

5. Since 1975/76 the central units for adult literacy have reported at the end of each financial year to the Secretaries of State on provision throughout England and Wales and the specific work of the central unit in that period. The report on provision has been based to a considerable extent on the reports submitted by local education authorities and voluntary organisations at the close of each financial year and these reports have contained statistical information as well as a narrative section concerned with progress in general.

6. The wider remit of the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) meant that the format used previously to seek information from LEAs and other providing bodies was no longer appropriate and thus ALBSU took the opportunity to review completely the collection of information. The views of LEAs and voluntary organisations were sought concerning both the format of the questionnaire to be used and its timing, and after taking these into consideration, it was decided to re-design the questionnaire to take account of the wider area of work covered by the Unit. Furthermore, the statistical 'snapshot' of provision previously based on one week in February was replaced by a similar 'snapshot' taken in November of each year, a date more closely linked to the return of other information by LEAs to DES concerning adult and further education. The narrative report on progress was no longer based on a financial year, but on the last academic year, a period more suited to the practice of educational institutions. Thus the statistical information based on a 'snapshot' relates to the week ended 7 November 1980 and the narrative to the academic year 1979 to August 1980.

7. Most of the information contained in this report is not directly comparable with information contained in the reports submitted by the Adult Literacy Resource Agency between 1975 and 1978 and the Adult Literacy Unit between 1978 and 1980, for a number of reasons. The area of work covered by ALBSU encompasses not only adult literacy but also many related basic skills and thus much of the information is new. Furthermore, the change in the questionnaire used and the collection dates on which much of the information is based make it impossible to compare with previous years.

The Organisation and Funding of Provision

8. Although it is difficult to generalise, it would appear that provision for adult literacy and related skills is a split responsibility in most LEAs. Adult literacy developed as part of the adult education service in most authorities and in many places adult numeracy has developed similarly, whereas most of the related basic communication and coping skills work related to vocational education or training has developed as part of the college based further education service. There are undoubtedly exceptions to this pattern, particularly where adult education is based within colleges of further education and there is a considerable blurring of the edges in practice in most areas. However, this separation does present considerable difficulties as far as the collection of

information is concerned. For example, one large urban LEA was not alone in reluctantly omitting information:

‘.....TOPs and YOPs students are entirely separated from the main body of adult basic education students, as the provision made for them is organised by individual colleges of further education, rather than the adult education service. Rather than delay further the production of this report, I decided to omit YOPs information altogether as it proved difficult to discover how much of this work was going on.....’

9. The difficulty is exacerbated in part by the remit of the Unit and the different definitions of adult basic education used in different authorities.

‘The definition of adult basic education used is wider than that used for this report to ALBSU, and this fact may serve to underline the general difficulties in reporting on this work’.

10. Furthermore, there appears to be no agreed definition of adult basic education accepted by all LEAs and thus while some have developed, from the base of adult literacy, work with the physically handicapped, the profoundly deaf and blind, others have limited the scope of the developments that have taken place to those closely connected to adult literacy and numeracy.

11. Numeracy work itself is often the responsibility of different individuals and institutions and in some areas it is not clear just how these responsibilities are divided up. For example, one LEA reports that:

‘Numeracy provision for adults is made within adult education institutes and colleges of further and higher education. Within institutes, responsibility for numeracy is taken (usually) by the Head of the Department of General Education or by the Literacy Organiser. Within colleges, responsibility for adult learners of numeracy is generally included within the brief of the Senior Lecturer and of the LII (Numeracy).’

12. A further difficulty arises in relation to young adults who attend colleges of further education, either as part of a special government programme for unemployed young adults (such as the Youth Opportunities Programme) or because they are enrolled on a college course. Many of these young people receive help with literacy and/or numeracy as part of a ‘Social and life skills’ programme or as part of a ‘communications workshop’ while others receive assistance on a regular basis almost incidentally. Moreover, not all of the education they receive could be said to be literacy and/or numeracy although a substantial part may be.

‘In colleges, students are not generally recruited specifically for literacy or numeracy classes but receive such tuition as part of a more general TEC, BEC, City and Guilds or other course, or as part of a ‘communication workshop’ which offers differing amounts of help in these areas according to individual needs’.

13. On balance, those areas where provision is separated between different parts of the post-school education service appear to have had the most difficulty in submitting a comprehensive report to ALBSU and in some cases have omitted information relating to basic skills provision in colleges of further

education. The statistics related to students receiving help with literacy and other basic skills and the numbers of staff involved are likely, therefore, to have been underestimated in returns for 1980/81.

14. The funding of the work covered by ALBSU's remit also comes from a variety of sources. Usually the LEA funds adult literacy and numeracy as a normal part of its adult and further education provision, either via a specific sum set aside in the budget or as an unspecified part of each local area's adult education budget. However, basic skills work linked to vocational education or training, such as Preparatory TOPs courses and the educational aspects of the Youth Opportunities Programme, are funded by the Manpower Services Commission. In the case of work with the mentally handicapped in adult training centres and offenders in penal establishments, other central and local government departments and agencies are also involved in funding local provision.

15. Many of the new developments that have taken place in the last year have developed from and been based on local adult literacy schemes, and to some extent, the development of ALBSU reflects these local developments. However, an exception needs to be made in relation to special programmes for unemployed young people which tend to be based in colleges of further education or in organisations such as training workshops or community projects. The role of adult education based literacy and numeracy schemes in relation to these programmes tends to be that of a specialist resource and advisory service, although in a few instances local schemes are more heavily involved in direct provision of 'social and life skills'. The Unit believes that many of the developments that have taken place have been due to the dedication and commitment of full and part-time staff rather than to the provision of additional funds specifically for new developments and we recognise that this has placed considerable stress on the often still fragile adult literacy service in many areas of England and Wales.

16. In most areas of England and Wales, literacy and other essential basic skills work have been protected from direct cuts in finance, although it should be recognised that cutbacks in general adult education have had an effect on basic level work ranging from lack of opportunity for students wishing to take up other education courses, to a reduction in the supervision and support available. One county LEA illustrates a common pattern:

'whilst the financial problems of recent years have necessitated considerable curtailment of general adult education, the level of provision for literacy and numeracy has remained constant'

17. Most LEAs estimate that provision in future years is likely to remain at current levels.

'It is anticipated that the financial provision in 1981/82 will be fundamentally the same as in 1980/81 with additions to offset inflation'.

'Teaching resources have for 1980/81 been held at the same level as for 1979/80. No growth budgets will again apply in 1981/82'.

18. Some 47 LEAs still provide help with literacy and numeracy free of charge and this compares with 63 LEAs who did not charge fees in 1976/77.

'Tuition remains free to literacy and disadvantaged students.....A recent survey conducted in the County indicated that two-thirds of students receiving literacy tuition are in the non fee-paying category (i.e. unemployed, on supplementary benefit etc.)

In one Midlands metropolitan borough the LEA has experimented with a reduced fee, a practice that occurs in many of the LEAs where fees are charged.

'In September 1979 the Education Committee reduced fees for a one year trial period from £3.60 per term plus £1.70 for each additional class, to £1.50 per term for any number of literacy or numeracy classes. This trial proved successful with more students opting for more than one class and a reduction in students leaving due to financial hardship. The Committee approved this fee structure formally in July 1980'.

19. The Unit is concerned to report that some LEAs have reduced literacy and other basic skills provision severely and this has had a considerable effect in the areas concerned. Often the claim has been made that basic education has only been cut by the same percentage as other parts of adult and further education and while this may be true, it ignores the disproportionate effect of cuts on a poorly funded service. The most extreme example of a reduction in the funds available for adult literacy is reported by one large LEA.

'With a cut of almost 30% in the funding, which included the loss of ¼ time staff, some class programme funding and some resources, together with necessarily reduced support from colleges, the Adult Literacy Service has experienced a demoralised year. During the first half of the year, the numbers of new volunteers and students fell. The reduction in annual class hours means loss of out-of-term cover hence loss of continuity of provision and therefore a greater drift away of students'.

20. Other LEAs whilst not making as severe cutbacks as that outlined above, have cut the length of classes provided from 2 hours to 1½ hours, reduced the length of the tuition year (often to less than 30 weeks) and increased class numbers, while others have increased fees or cut the allocation for materials and equipment. In some areas cuts in budget have led to the introduction of waiting lists which have resulted in a loss of motivation for those potential students who have to wait for help. These cuts in provision, whilst not as dramatic as the large scale reductions in finance in one or two places, undermine the need for sensitivity which has been accepted since the beginning of the adult literacy campaign in 1975.

21. From the information available, ALBSU would estimate that approximately 66% of the LEAs are maintaining provision at current levels, 21% have reduced the funds available or will do so in 1981/82, and 13% have increased the level of provision or intend to do so in the next financial year. Thus, the pattern of growth and expansion of adult literacy and other basic skills work which took place as a result of the adult literacy campaign in the 70's has been replaced in most areas by a period of maintenance and nil growth. Although it

is pleasing to report that the financial position of adult literacy and associated basic skills work in 1980/81 has in the main not worsened, a service at present coping with a small percentage of those in need from a fragile financial base does not augur well for further expansion and development.

22. Basic education work with young adults as part of the Youth Opportunities Programme has continued to expand and undoubtedly special funding of this provision has helped protect it from reductions in finance. However, this expansion has mainly benefitted the further education sector and has only had a marginal effect on most basic literacy and numeracy provision.

23. The changes relating to the provision of Preparatory TOPs courses outlined in previous years still appear to be having an effect in some areas and a number of LEAs comment on this area of work

‘With diminishing funds available, the number of courses organised by the Training Services Division has decreased. This is unfortunate as the Preparatory TOPs courses by their existence have provided a base of full-time students and hence staff who were professionally involved with literacy. This built up a body of expertise which benefitted all classes’.

24. The Manpower Services Commission, however, states that nationally more people received preparatory course training under TOPs in 1980/81 than in the previous year. MSC have provided the following information concerning provision in 1980/81.

TABLE 1: NUMBER OF TRAINEES WHO TOOK PREPARATORY COURSES DURING 1980/81 and NUMBER OF COURSE LOCATIONS: BY TSD REGIONS

	Trainees	Locations
Northern	124	9
Yorkshire & Humberside	352	19
North West	430	26
Midlands	741	29
Wales	135	4
South West	114	3
South East	636	24
London	660	32
	3,192	146

(A further 340 trainees took courses at 8 locations in Scotland)

Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Students 1980/81

25. The number of students referred for help with literacy, numeracy or a combination of both in the academic year 1979/80 was 42,217, of whom 35,618 began tuition within the year. Of this total some 32,513 were seeking help with literacy, 7,406 were seeking help with numeracy and the remainder wanted help with both literacy and numeracy.

TABLE 2: STUDENT REFERRALS: 1 September 1979 — 30 August 1980

	Literacy	Numeracy	Combination
English Counties	15,426	3,711	857
Wales	1,350	166	446
Metropolitan Districts	7,643	2,011	971
ILEA and London Boroughs	7,122	1,281	24
Voluntary bodies	972	237	—
	32,513	7,406	2,298

26. Most referrals for literacy and numeracy came locally rather than through the national referral service which operates through the Adult Literacy Support Services Fund (now Broadcasting Support Services) in England and through Dolen in Wales.

This pattern of referral reflects both the improvement in local referral networks and the reduction in media activity in 1980/81, particularly that of the BBC, compared with previous years. That this level of referrals has been achieved despite the lack of publicity in many areas indicates the latent demand for help with basic skills that remains in almost every area of England and Wales. One LEA comments that:

‘this year publicity has been avoided for fear that the schemes could not respond. It is restricted to features in the adult education prospectus and thus relies on a network of well-established contacts.’

27. This largely passive approach to student recruitment in many respects reflects the approach to publicity prevalent before 1975 and contrasts with the more active recruitment approaches adopted as part of the adult literacy campaign. This change of emphasis is largely due it seems to the lack of expansion in basic education provision because of a lack of adequate resources and reflects the ‘plateau’ many schemes have now reached. Understandably, LEAs do not wish to recruit new students only to place them on a lengthy waiting list or to offer them inadequate tuition.

‘At a time when resources are shrinking, it is pointless to arouse expectations which cannot be met, so a ‘softly softly’ approach to publicity is favoured to one of blanket coverage.’

28. The variety of publicity used by those LEAs who still publicise their service indicates a move away from a single approach and a recognition that publicity needs to be maintained and varied continually. Exhibitions in libraries, news articles in the press and posters in shops, offices, libraries, doctors’ surgeries, Job Centres, Health Clinics, Citizens’ Advice Bureaux, Social Security Offices etc. are often quoted as part of a publicity programme. Local radio, where appropriate, has also been used extensively in some areas.

‘The biggest single increase has been in the number of people sent along by the Job Centre, most of whom wanted immediate help in passing a test for entrance to a Skill Centre, many of whom have stayed on with the scheme after passing their test.’

International Literacy Day in September of each year often marks the beginning of a publicity drive, not only to recruit new students and volunteers, but

also to inform the general public of the value of adult literacy and numeracy schemes. The Unit is itself involved in publicising International Literacy Day at national level as well as producing resource material such as posters and car stickers that can be used by local schemes.

29. The range of students coming forward for help remains wide and includes those seeking help specifically with literacy or numeracy as well as those who request help with both. As far as literacy is concerned, some LEAs report that early stage readers now form the majority of new referrals, whilst others comment that the largest number of new students come forward for help with writing and spelling. The pattern in numeracy tends to broadly divide new students into two groups — those seeking help with a specific numeracy based entrance test (usually, though not always, a Skill Centre test) and those who want more wide ranging help with everyday functional problems.

30. The number of students recorded by LEAs and voluntary organisations as under tuition in November 1980 was 85,079 and includes students receiving help with literacy, numeracy or both literacy and numeracy. It needs to be stressed that these figures are not directly comparable with earlier years both because of the Unit's wider remit and the change in the date on which the statistics are based.

TABLE 3: STUDENTS RECEIVING TUITION IN THE WEEK ENDED 7 NOVEMBER 1980

	Literacy	Numeracy	A combination of literacy & numeracy	Total
English counties	24,422	2,514	10,886	37,822
Wales	2,276	218	1,870	4,364
Metropolitan Districts	11,386	1,556	10,970	23,912
ILEA and London Boroughs	8,441	1,412	2,564	12,417
Penal Establishments	1,769	1,096	2,307	5,172
Voluntary Organisations	1,147	161	84	1,392
	49,441	6,957	28,681	85,079

31. The pattern of adult literacy tuition in recent years has seen an increasing emphasis on small group tuition and a consequent reduction in 1:1 tuition, although it needs to be remembered that national statistics do not always adequately represent the diversity of provision from area to area. Thus there are LEAs whose provision is based almost exclusively on small groups and others who provide mainly individual tuition supplemented by only a small number of groups. It appears that taken as a whole, literacy and numeracy provision is increasingly provided in small groups although a good deal of individual tuition continues to feature and just under 25% of the students under tuition are being taught individually.

32. Of the 85,079 students under tuition, LEAs and voluntary organisations report that 2,441 were receiving help as part of Training Services Division Preparatory TOPS Courses and 12,715 as part of the Special Programmes Division Youth Opportunities Programme, and the vast majority of those students are recorded as receiving a combination of literacy and numeracy tuition. However, as indicated previously, the Unit takes the view that in

relation to special provision for young unemployed adults, the extent of provision is likely to be considerably underestimated.

33. Almost 7,000 students were recorded as receiving help purely with numeracy and almost 7,500 numeracy students were referred during the year. Undoubtedly, numeracy provision, while having some similarities with literacy, needs different approaches, both to tuition and to recruitment. A number of LEAs report little apparent demand for help with numeracy despite the stimulus provided by television programmes whilst others, although acknowledging that demand is relatively small in total numbers, report that numbers are increasing and that they are able to provide viable provision, albeit on a limited scale. The majority of numeracy tuition is based on groups, although this poses some problems due to the widely differing types of problems and needs that students present. However, it appears that the stigma attached to difficulties with numeracy is somewhat less than that attached to literacy difficulties and thus one of the major reasons for providing private individual help does not apply quite as readily in this area of work. The main providers of numeracy tuition are the LEAs with only 161 students reported as receiving purely numeracy help as part of programmes organised by voluntary organisations.

Staff and Volunteers

34. The wider remit of the Unit makes it difficult to estimate accurately the total number of staff involved in adult literacy and basic skills work in 1980/81. The collection of statistics by LEAs is more complicated compared with previous statistical information relating to adult literacy and in a number of cases LEA officers were unsure whether all staff they regarded as involved in adult basic education should be included or whether some should be omitted. The Unit's remit in relation to English as a Second Language, for example, led to considerable confusion and thus the Unit advised that staff involved solely in ESL work should, for the time being, be omitted. However, it was not possible to check the interpretation of adult literacy and basic skills staff in every case and thus the statistical information relating to staff may not be as precise as in previous years.

35. TABLE 4: NUMBER OF STAFF INVOLVED IN ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS PROVISION 1980/81

	LEA*		TSD		YOP		Penal Estab- lishments	
	F/T	P/T	F/T	P/T	F/T	P/T	F/T	P/T
English Counties	215	2,537	66	255	249	694	96	288
Wales	5	297	7	7	48	31	3	17
Metropolitan Districts	128	1,414	71	112	128	299	24	75
ILEA and London Boroughs	188	702	40	59	50	44	12	24
Voluntary Organisations	17	49		6	17			
TOTAL:	553	4,999	184	439	492	1,068	135	404

* includes staff assigned by the Unit to work on Special Development Projects

36. Staff involved in adult literacy and basic skills work include full-time staff who are involved solely in this type of provision, full-time staff who spend only part of their time on literacy and other basic skills provision and part-time staff who range from two hours per week group tutors to part-time staff employed for as many as 18–20 hours per week to organise such provision.

37. Staff involved in adult education based provision may be involved purely in organising provision or purely in teaching or in both organising and teaching. A number of LEAs have full-time basic education organisers/co-ordinators and in the majority of areas these are adult literacy practitioners who have been given a wider brief to include other aspects of basic education. Unfortunately in most cases the development of the wider remit has not been matched with an increase in status for the members of staff concerned or the necessary increase in resources.

38. A large number of the full-time staff involved in adult literacy and basic skills provision are funded by the Manpower Services Commission and are engaged either on Preparatory TOPs Courses or in educational elements of the Youth Opportunities Programme. It would appear from the information returned to the Unit by LEAs that almost 50% of the full-time staff involved are included in these two specialised programmes and this indicates the largely part-time nature of most basic skills tuition provided by LEAs and voluntary organisations. Many LEAs do not employ any full-time staff in this work and rely exclusively on a part-time service whilst the majority of others will usually have only one full-time member of staff. A minority of LEAs employ more than one full-time member of staff as well as a number of part-timers.

‘The programme of adult literacy and basic education is staffed by the full-time Literacy Co-ordinator, four full-time literacy workers, 22 part-time organisers, some 50 part-time teachers and 400–500 volunteers’

39. The number of staff involved in basic skills provision appears to have remained constant despite the difficult economic climate which affects all authorities. Where cuts have been made, it has often involved part-time staff, some of whom have ceased to be employed or had the hours they are employed reduced. In the case of full-time staff, a number of examples of early retirement have been reported where the vacancy created has not been filled, the duties being absorbed into the work of other non-specialist staff. The expansion in the range of work covered mentioned earlier, although resulting in an increase in staff in some LEAs, has not seen a significant increase in the number of staff employed in most areas and thus most full-time organisers are under increased pressure compared to previous years.

40. The total number of volunteers working in basic skills work in England and Wales as at 7 November 1980 was 24,947 and the vast majority of these were involved with the provision of adult literacy.



TABLE 5: VOLUNTEERS INVOLVED IN THE WEEK ENDED 7 NOVEMBER 1980

	1:1 tuition	Group tuition	Penal Establishments	Total	Waiting List
English counties	11,935	3,870	111	15,916	2,945
Wales	581	415		996	67
Metropolitan Districts	3,990	896	2	4,888	828
ILEA and London Boroughs	1,367	894	7	2,268	395
Voluntary Organisations	724	155	—	879	155
	18,597	6,230	120	24,947	4,390

Of the total number of volunteers, just over 74% were involved in individual tuition and just over 25% were assisting in groups.

41. The emphasis placed on group tuition in adult literacy has continued in most areas and there has been a subsequent reduction in individual tuition particularly that taking place in the student's or tutor's home.

'Fewer tutors have been employed on a voluntary basis for adult literacy work compared with previous years. There has been a reduction in the number of students receiving 1:1 tuition and a growing emphasis on groups as an appropriate medium for the wide range of tuition often needed.'

42. Most group tuition involves one or two volunteers to assist the paid teacher and all LEAs continue to use volunteers in one capacity or another. Most referrals come from local sources of publicity (the central referral service accounting for very few referrals) and although one or two authorities mention difficulties in recruiting volunteers, the overwhelming majority are able to recruit new volunteers with little apparent difficulty.

'To attract new volunteers we supplement advertisements with leaflets and posters displayed in local shops. It is necessary to renew this publicity on a regular basis.....'

43. The initial training of volunteers still features as a major component of LEA and voluntary organisation training programmes. Many LEAs and voluntary organisations continue to provide adult literacy training for volunteers based on models developed at the beginning of the campaign, although the content has often been considerably modified in the light of experience.

'All literacy volunteers receive an initial interview to explain the Scheme, followed by 6×2 hour sessions for initial training, either day or evening.'

Other LEAs and voluntary organisations have developed a pattern of training based on one or two initial sessions followed by some practical experience, often in a group, and concluded with four or five further training sessions. Others ask for even more commitment to training.

'All volunteers taken on must attend the initial training course and give a commitment of a minimum of one year and they must attend four of the workshops which are held at regular intervals during the year.'

Unfortunately it is sad to report that there are also areas where volunteers do not receive any initial training due to lack of resources and this undoubtedly seriously affects the quality of provision.

44. The training opportunities available to paid staff in adult literacy and basic skills work varies considerably from area to area. Some LEAs provide an initial training for paid staff whilst others take the view that teachers of children are qualified without further training to teach adults. Others tend to encourage the appointment of experienced volunteers to paid posts and offer a range of in-service training opportunities ranging from single day workshops to residential weekends.

'Group tutors were, in the past, usually trained teachers recruited by advertisement who often had no experience of teaching adults. Over the past two or three years we have tried to recruit our group tutors from the ranks of experienced volunteers, regardless of their academic qualifications or training. By and large, this has been highly successful, lessons seem to be more practically orientated; students from 1:1 move quite easily into the groups and their previous tutors are welcome. Furthermore, these tutors have proved very keen to involve themselves in training sessions.....'

45. A number of LEAs mention training opportunities provided as part of ALBSU sponsored regional training programmes and it appears that regional events usually supplement events organised locally.

'Members of the Adult Centre have in many ways been fortunate in being able to participate in a variety of training experiences through the work of the Merseyside and Cheshire Basic Education Committee. These include sessions on materials, group dynamics, training skills, special needs groups, counselling skills, visual display, employment and training opportunities and management skills.'

'Three courses for organising and training staff have been arranged by ALBSU in co-operation with the Regional Council, during the past year, and attendance figures are as follows:—

One day course on group teaching	— 16
One day course on management of provision	— 18
Week-end course on social and life skills and literacy	— 3'

However, cutbacks in training budgets have often meant that regional training programmes have, in some areas, become the major source of in-service training opportunities at a time when new developments demand more training opportunities rather than less. Additionally in the East Midlands, cutbacks at the Regional Advisory Council meant that ALBSU sponsored training was curtailed for a period although by the end of 1980/81 a full programme was again in operation.

46. A few LEAs have also introduced the RSA Certificate in the Teaching of Literacy Skills to Adults, although again lack of resources has meant that the development of these courses has been slow and somewhat patchy.

47. The extent of the training opportunities available to staff involved in the social and life skills element of the Youth Opportunities Programme continues to give cause for concern. It appears that few specific courses exist, although some staff attend adult literacy training courses. Additionally, in a limited way regional training programmes attempt to provide a stimulus for training in this area of work by mounting one or two regional events which involve staff concerned with YOP. The survey of participants attending regional training events carried out by ALBSU indicated that few YOP staff have received either specific initial or in-service training for their work.

48. On the whole ALBSU is encouraged by the number of LEAs who, in difficult financial circumstances, continue to give high priority to training for staff in literacy and basic skills work. However, in some areas training opportunities have become a thing of the past and this undoubtedly affects the quality of the service as well as the morale of the staff concerned. The Unit regrets this considerable disparity of training provision, particularly as we believe that staff training and development is an effective method of developing and improving the service.

Voluntary Organisations

49. The Unit received information concerning their provision in 1980/81 from 39 voluntary organisations in England and Wales (55 were asked for information) and 24 organisations were involved in providing tuition for students. The number of students receiving help through voluntary bodies was 1,392 and this represents 1.6% of the total number of students receiving tuition. The majority of these students are receiving help with literacy and as yet few voluntary bodies make specific provision for numeracy. Some 17 full-time and 49 part-time staff were employed by voluntary organisations in providing literacy and numeracy provision and a further 17 full-time and 6 part-time staff were involved in Preparatory TOPS provision or the 'social and life skills' elements of the Youth Opportunities Programme. Some 879 volunteers were also involved in programmes organised by voluntary bodies.

50. The current economic climate has undoubtedly seriously affected those voluntary organisations involved in adult literacy and basic skills provision. Many of the organisations concerned are fairly small (only 4 had more than 100 students) and their financial base is, therefore, particularly vulnerable at a time when their main source of financial support, the LEAs, are themselves under considerable pressure. From the information provided by voluntary organisations, ALBSU would estimate that the position of most voluntary organisations has gradually worsened since the cessation of direct central funding in 1978. All of the Unit's day to day contact with the voluntary field would support this view, although it is acknowledged that some voluntary bodies, particularly those in the main urban conurbations have been protected to some extent.

51. Undoubtedly some voluntary organisations have been so seriously affected by cut-backs in financial support that what provision now exists is minimal and rests increasingly on the goodwill of part-time staff and volunteers. Often these organisations are in areas where cut-backs have

seriously affected the LEA's own provision. One voluntary organisation report describes in detail the effect of cuts in provision which have continued every year since 1978. Weekly paid tutor hours for organising and administering the scheme are now 24% of those provided in March 1978 and this is

'despite the fact that demand from past, continuing and new students indicates that the needs are for expansion rather than contraction of provision'.

52. These cuts have meant that no funds are available for materials, staff development and training, and publicity, and that the ability to provide tuition at a variety of times has almost disappeared completely. Even more serious has been the effect on the morale of the part-time staff concerned in the scheme.

'To preside over the destruction of a necessary service is disheartening. To attempt to run a literacy scheme without books, without the budget to sustain a newsletter, with no budget for training or publicity is doubly disheartening — firstly because it is difficult to accept shoddy standards of provision; secondly because you are faced daily with the evidence of unmet need, in the knowledge that such plans as exist are for the further reduction of the service.'

53. Other voluntary organisations foresee increasing financial problems in the future,

'The voluntary finance of the Project should enable it to survive for a couple of years. However, if no grant aid is forthcoming from the local education authority, then the service will necessarily contract with further loss to disadvantaged adults'

whilst others have already received cuts in the quite minimal levels of grant they obtain from the LEA:

'We are given an annual grant by the County and this year this was cut to a round figure of £1,000.'

54. A few voluntary organisations involved in the major cities of England and Wales have continued provision at similar levels to that of previous years and in a very few cases the level of financial support they receive has been increased slightly. However, that said, the complementary innovatory role played by voluntary organisations in the provision of adult literacy and basic skills is being considerably eroded and, in some areas, is in danger of disappearing altogether unless some action is taken. More seriously, the number of active voluntary organisations has reduced from year to year and few new organisations have become involved in this essential area of work except through ALBSU project sponsorship. Of the 27 Special Development Projects sponsored by ALBSU in 1980/81, 10 were sponsored in collaboration with voluntary bodies of varying kinds; however, the Unit recognises that this sponsorship does not assist the maintenance of core provision except in a marginal sense.

Developments

55. Although the last year has posed problems as far as financial resources are concerned for most LEAs and voluntary organisations, a number of reports received outline new developments that have taken place. The majority of these developments are limited by the available resources but they do illustrate the continuing move in most areas towards broader based provision, often arising from the adult literacy provision developed since 1975.

‘The Literacy Scheme has, significantly and steadily graduated to being the umbrella for meeting a variety of basic education needs. . . . Such basic needs are wider than literacy and numeracy and embrace the fundamentals of language development, number, communication, social, life and coping skills — and such general knowledge vital for day to day living.’

56. A number of LEAs note the advantage of extending existing structures to provide for the basic educational needs of a variety of individuals and groups, not only for organisational reasons, but also because it is felt that the adult literacy campaign provided insights and comparisons that may be valuable in a wider context.

57. A significant number of LEAs have a closer working relationship with the Manpower Services Commission particularly in respect of Preparatory TOPs provision. Others also mention the links between the Youth Opportunities Programme and basic education provision although, due to the often separate organisational structures mentioned earlier, links are somewhat more tenuous. Although it is recognised that many unemployed young adults need help with literacy and other basic skills, relatively few are attracted to the general adult literacy provision organised by LEAs, those who do seek tuition are often poorly motivated, and this presents problems for schemes with limited resources.

58. General liaison between basic education schemes and other organisations continues to improve in almost every area of England and Wales. This liaison includes contact with Job Centres, Probation Service, Libraries, Social Workers, Careers Officers and a host of other professionals and agencies that are involved in referring potential students. In the past, referrals from such agencies have often been based on insufficient knowledge of the nature of basic education provision and this has led to a high drop-out rate and a good deal of misunderstanding. It appears that liaison is needed on a regular basis, partly due to staff turnover in some of the agencies concerned, and partly to remind and up-date other professionals on the organisation and role of basic education. In some areas, this liaison extends to providing training courses for librarians and probation officers or making inputs to professional training or staff development sessions on a regular basis. A number of LEAs specifically mention liaison with schools.

‘The schools service and some adult basic education workers are planning regular meetings, to examine co-operation over school leavers’

59. Increased co-operation with other agencies has been particularly important in trying to meet the needs of unemployed adults. The growth in the number of adults who are unemployed, often for substantial periods of time,

has placed additional burdens on basic skills provision in almost every area of England and Wales. Provision that was designed to meet the needs of students in work (i.e. evening groups) is rarely appropriate for those who have a considerable amount of time on their hands and thus many LEAs have recognised the need for a modification of strategies used successfully in the past. One LEA lists its development in this area as:

- ‘— a growth in daytime provision for the unemployed;
- a course for the unemployed to develop functional communication skills once basic literacy is acquired;
- an advisory service at the local Job Centre offering information/counselling in basic education opportunities;
- a termly course in English for Job Improvements’

60. It seems that where provision has been made it has proved highly successful if well publicised. Some courses are intended to help unemployed students with entry tests for Skills Centres or the Armed Forces, whilst others are more wide ranging and are based on individual needs. At a time of high unemployment and few job vacancies, long-term substantial provision for unemployed adults wishing to improve their basic skills is a high priority, although it is unrealistic to adopt the view that improved basic education will instantly result in employment for any student. What it may do, however, is enable the individual to cope more adequately with the demands that unemployment places on the unemployed and their families as well as providing a welcome boost to self-image and confidence.

61. Despite these recent developments, the disparity between the provision made for young unemployed adults up to the age of nineteen and for those older is striking. Moreover, substantial provision is often affected, not just by the costs involved, but also by the Department of Health and Social Security rules concerning availability for employment which makes it impossible for many unemployed adults to attend on a regular basis. Furthermore, in some areas increased provision for the unemployed is only able to be made by decreasing provision for other basic education students.

62. The Unit has recognised since its establishment the need to provide opportunities for unemployed adults of whatever age to improve their basic skills including literacy and numeracy and a number of ALBSU sponsored projects are experimenting in this area of work. However, without additional resources, it is not possible, in our view, to provide the level of opportunities to meet the likely demand. Thus, we recognise the need for special measures to assist the establishment of much needed provision.

63. A few LEAs and voluntary organisations are concerned with encouraging release for workers who wish to improve their basic education, although the scale of these developments is at present very limited,

‘A small number of students employed by the Borough get paid time off work to attend various schemes.....’

The Unit also sponsors, in collaboration with the National Union of Public Employees, a project involved in providing basic education for employees of

London University through a scheme of release and it is hoped that, even in a difficult economic climate, more of this type of provision will be established.

64. While much English as a Second Language provision has developed separately from other aspects of basic education, increasingly links are being established. In some areas literacy, numeracy and ESL provision are being housed in a single resource unit and in others regular liaison occurs. Adult Literacy schemes have been involved in some areas with provision for Vietnamese adults and this has particularly occurred in areas where there is no tradition of ESL work with adults.

‘While the demand for English as a Second Language remains comparatively small, about 30 Vietnamese families have settled in the past 12 months, and are receiving English language tuition in a variety of ways. These range from adult education evening classes, employing professional teachers with ESL experience, to adult literacy groups using volunteers’

‘Several Vietnamese have joined classes to improve their basic skills. this has occasionally created difficulties which have been overcome and literacy workers have shown their usual adaptability’

Other areas have begun to develop ESL courses primarily to cope with the influx of Vietnamese immigrants.

65. The confusion concerning ALBSU’s remit in relation to English as a Second Language has created problems not only for the Unit itself, but for the LEAs and voluntary bodies returning reports on their provision. The development of a wider basic education service that is occurring in most areas of England and Wales includes much ESL provision, although it is generally recognised that different types of provision need different approaches. ALBSU is involved in sponsoring some projects that concern ethnic minorities for whom English is not the mother tongue, but is specifically excluded from sponsoring other worthwhile projects that involve second language provision.

66. A number of LEAs are involved in developing provision for ‘special groups’ within the community and the pace of these developments continues to increase. A few have established specific ‘outreach’ workers with this in mind.

‘Their brief is to develop literacy provision within a Community Education area of the City. They work closely with other professionals in the community and it is envisaged that in the long term their presence will enable the Scheme to expand and offer a variety of adult literacy provision tailored to meet the needs of individuals and groups. Groups already established include:

- A teenage mothers group
- A battered wives group
- A mother and toddlers group
- A retired women’s group
- A single person group
- and groups for unemployed young people’

67. Another metropolitan LEA has established a project sponsored by ALBSU which aims to develop a range of provision in specific inner-city areas, in liaison with existing community groups, while a number of other LEAs and voluntary organisations describe specific initiatives they have taken in the past year.

68. The establishment of specific classes for the mentally handicapped, usually in collaboration with the Social Services Department, Adult Training Centres and hospitals is a feature in a number of areas, as is provision for adults with a variety of handicaps, such as spastics. A few schemes have also begun to make provision for the physically handicapped and the visually and hearing impaired.

'Many of the clients (describing a centre for the physically handicapped) have missed out on aspects of basic education in previous years because of their handicaps and now appear to be benefitting from the opportunity to learn in small groups on a 1:1 basis.'

69. An increasing number of authorities now co-operate in providing specific provision in collaboration with the Probation and After Care Services and often this revolves around groups that meet in the probation office. In some cases this service is funded by the LEA, whereas in others the probation service provides the finance.

'The Project has also supplied a tutor for a drop-in probation centre and provides him with materials, although he is paid by the Probation Service'.

70. Increasing links have also been forged between penal institutions and basic education provision in order that adults learning in institutions can have the opportunity to continue to learn after release. This area of development is by no means simple, particularly as sentences may be served in penal establishments far from the area the ex-offender will return to.

'By linking with the Probation Service, tutors are trained and linked with boys in borstal from the local area so that they may receive tuition and guidance before and after release.'

71. A significant minority of LEAs report an increasing number of literacy students attempting to take examinations of one kind or another. One London borough reports that they

'are always looking for a more suitable pre-O level qualification for adults in literacy and numeracy which will mean something to employers. In the meantime, a two year +O level course will be offered, using volunteers to enable students to work at their own pace and to permit entry at any point in the year.'

Others have introduced the CSE English Examination (Mode 3) whilst an increasing number of LEAs and voluntary bodies have organised courses aimed at the RSA Continuing English Certificate — a Certificate which arises directly out of an ALU/ALBSU sponsored Special Development Project in Cambridgeshire.

72. 'Bridging Courses' which have developed over the last few years in many areas continue to be seen as an essential part of provision enabling as they do students who have mastered the basics of literacy and numeracy to enter other adult and further education courses. A number of joint student/tutor writing workshops have also been held, although lack of resources often means that these have to be confined to a single day rather than spread over a residential weekend. The Unit has consistently encouraged this approach as did its predecessors and regrets that lack of resources at a local level have limited the number of writing workshops that can be organised, particularly as student writing is now recognised by almost all literacy schemes.

73. One large county authority sums up all of these developments as follows:

'The growing 'outreach' nature of the work puts trained tutors where and when they are required — into homes, hospitals, prisons, hostels, adult training centres, Youth Opportunities schemes, probation and after-care centres, street and neighbourhood schemes.'

However, in most areas development is hampered by lack of funds and this is unlikely to improve in 1981/82.

'At a time of economic difficulties, it is difficult to plan developments without considering withdrawing resources from other areas of work. Thus, although basic education work currently is a significant proportion of the College's total provision, it is not easy to see how this can be increased without detriment to other areas of the curriculum. innovations will depend, not on staff initiatives and enthusiasm for this work, which is not in question, but on the availability of resources.'

PART II: THE ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS UNIT 1980/81

Introduction

74. When the Adult Literacy Unit replaced the Adult Literacy Resource Agency in 1980 this resulted in a serious delay in ALU becoming operational as well as an underspending of the funds available in the first year. A similar situation occurred when ALU itself was replaced by a new Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit with a wider remit. In announcing the establishment of ALBSU with effect from April 1980, the Secretary of State for Education and Science had reiterated that the new Unit should be developed from the base created by the Adult Literacy Unit and whilst this had the benefit of providing a measure of continuity, it did not in itself overcome this operational delay.

75. For example, although ALBSU was developed from the existing Adult Literacy Unit, it was recognised that the new Unit would need a slightly larger staff complement to reflect and develop its wider area of work. Alan Wells, previously Head of ALU, was appointed Head of ALBSU and Elspeth Cardy, previously Field Consultant with ALU, was appointed as one of ALBSU's three Field Consultants. However, Terry Riley, who had been a Field Consultant with both ALRA and ALU returned after his period of secondment to the Nottinghamshire Authority and it was not until September 1980 that Judith Banbury and Pamela Jones took up their duties as Field Consultants and that the Unit's staffing complement was complete.

76. Moreover, the Unit's lease on 52/54 High Holborn came to an end in September 1980 and, whilst an extension was considered, the lack of space available for a slightly larger Unit meant that an office move was essential. Fortunately, the Unit, in collaboration with the National Institute of Adult Education, ALBSU's parent body, was able to find suitable office accommodation on a short term lease at Kingsbourne House, 229/231 High Holborn, and the move of office was completed in August 1980.

77. These initial difficulties were exacerbated by the need to inform the field of the establishment of the Unit and of its wider brief. Publicising the new areas covered by the Unit's remit was particularly important in respect of the sponsorship of special development projects especially as the major proportion of ALBSU's grant was to be spent on project sponsorship. Thus guidelines for special development projects were drawn up as quickly as possible and circulated widely to providing bodies in England and Wales (See appendix 4). However, all this took time and resulted in a considerable delay initially in approving project submissions — a delay which again meant that the Unit was not able to spend the total of the grant available in 1980/81 and had to seek the permission of the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Office to vary the proportion spent on project sponsorship.

78. The experience of the last few years concerning the establishment of special national units such as ALBSU indicates that an initial period of planning is necessary when the terms of reference are significantly changed. Further, this period of planning needs to be undertaken as far as possible

without the pressure created by the closing down of one operation and without the constraints imposed by the need to spend a fixed amount in this initial period of operation. This is particularly so if the unit concerned has a limited period of operation, so is unable to carry the funds available over financial years. The Unit appreciates the constraints imposed on the Education Departments in this respect and is grateful that the level of ALBSU's grant increased from year 1 to year 2. However, it would prove more beneficial if the approximate level of grant in each of the first three years was indicated at the outset in order that an essentially developmental unit could plan appropriately rather than entirely from year to year. This additional flexibility would increase, in our view, the effectiveness of central units.

79. The Unit's Management Committee met for the first time on 31 March 1980 and consisted of representatives of the DES, Welsh Office, the local authority associations, MSC, the Home Office, Welsh Joint Education Committee, voluntary bodies, NATFHE and the Association for Adult and Continuing Education as well as representatives nominated by the Unit's parent body, the National Institute of Adult Education. Mr Kenneth Brooksbank, the Chairman of the Adult Literacy Unit Management Committee, accepted the invitation of the Secretary of State to become Chairman of ALBSU's Management Committee and Arthur Stock, the Director of NIAE, became the Committee Secretary.

80. The first task for the Unit's Management Committee — ALBSU's policy making body — was to establish the method of operation of the Unit, particularly in relation to the new remit. The remit of ALBSU as stated in the Unit's Memorandum of Arrangements is concerned with

'provision designed to improve the standards of proficiency for adults, whose first or second language is English, in the areas of literacy and numeracy, and those related basic communication and coping skills, without which people are impeded from applying or being considered for employment'

and it was the interpretation of this remit which initially concerned the Management Committee. The Committee felt that it was clear that the Unit's remit did not extend to take in all of the work defined as 'adult basic education' in the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education report, 'A Strategy for the Basic Education of Adults', which detailed the core content of adult basic education as:

1. Verbal and communication skills — including literacy.
2. Mathematical and number skills.
3. Coping skills or life skills including:
 - a) domestic management
 - b) knowledge of main government and social service agencies
 - c) work related knowledge
 - d) health and family relationships
 - e) community related knowledge

The Committee further recognised that the Secretary of State intended ALBSU to be concerned with verbal and communication skills, mathematical

and number skills and coping skills or life skills insofar as they related to employment rather than with the other broader areas of work detailed in the ACACE Report.

81. The Management Committee also felt that developments from the base of adult literacy by ALBSU should be gradual and needed to take place over the initial period of operation (1980–83) in order that new work was created from the base of literacy and had clear connections with it. The Committee also recognised that with limited resources and a limited period of operation, the Unit should not attempt to do everything required but should concentrate on some key areas of work including literacy and post-basic literacy, adult numeracy and essential basic skills related to work and training including contact with trade unions and employers, literacy and numeracy in the context of vocational courses (including the Youth Opportunities Programme, Unified Vocational Preparation, Preparatory TOPs) and the basic educational needs of the unemployed.

82. Whilst not wishing to concentrate on specific groups, the Committee acknowledged the need to take account of groups such as the mentally handicapped, ex-offenders and ethnic minorities as well as the needs of second language speakers, particularly at the post basic level.

Further, the Management Committee saw all of this work in the context of those adults who had benefitted least from the education system — usually the unskilled and unqualified.

The Consultancy Service

83. One of the major functions of ALBSU is to offer a consultancy and advisory service to LEAs, voluntary bodies and other providing bodies. The experience of the Adult Literacy Unit between 1978 and 1980 pointed to a variety of work under the general heading of consultancy/advisory services, much of which is informal and difficult to quantify.

84. Formal Consultancy visits are made on receipt of a request from an LEA or voluntary organisation and normally involve meetings and discussions with officers and field workers spread over a number of days. These visits are concerned with the overall situation of basic skills work within the area of the organisation and include advice on restructuring, co-ordination and development. A written report of each visit is sent to the organisation concerned.

85. In 1980–81 a number of formal consultancy visits were made by ALBSU and these visits and the Unit's reports were well received and contributed significantly to the restructuring or development being undertaken. One large metropolitan LEA, for instance, comments that the Unit's visit and report took place

‘at an opportune time and contributed to our thinking on restructuring the adult literacy service’.

A number of the recommendations made by ALBSU were incorporated into the Authority's new structure. The report submitted after a visit made by ALBSU staff to a large county authority illustrates the positive assistance the

Unit provides through consultancy visits. Not only did the visit assist the Authority's officers in considering how to make the service more effective, but by providing an 'outside' view drawn from successful experience in other areas of England and Wales the Unit was able to suggest a gradual restructuring of the service within the constraint of the funds available.

86. Informal consultancy work is, however, more difficult to quantify as much of it takes place by telephone or letter, although it may also involve a visit of limited duration to discuss a specific area of work or problem. These visits are more often arranged at organiser/co-ordinator level and an informal report or letter is sent to the organisation concerned. It is a continuing and important part of the Unit's work which is valued highly by those working in the field.

Training

87. The Unit's main functions in respect of training concern

'the co-ordination and, where appropriate, the direct provision of relevant training where such provision is additional to that planned by LEAs'

and in policy terms, this part of ALBSU's remit has included substantial programmes of regional training sponsored by the Unit and planned and administered in collaboration with Regional Advisory Councils and the Welsh Joint Education Committee. These programmes of regional training, first introduced by the Adult Literacy Resource Agency in 1976/77, were continued by ALBSU in 1980/81, and began to reflect the wider remit of the Unit.

88. In order to consider the operation of regional training programmes, the Unit convened a meeting of RAC representatives early in 1980 as well as organising a training conference for practitioners involved in the operation of a programme, at Buxton in November 1980. These consultative meetings pointed to the need to continue to sponsor programmes of regional training but to review the operation of the programmes sponsored by ALBSU to consider how their effectiveness could be increased. This review was carried out in the Spring of 1981 and the Unit is particularly indebted to Bill Boaden, a co-opted member of ALBSU's Management Committee who acted as the Enquiry Officer for the review.

89. Although the Notes for Guidance arising from the review were not issued until after April 1981, it is useful to report that in recommending ways to increase the effectiveness of regional training programmes, the review re-affirmed the basic soundness of the structures developed in each region over the last five years.

90. Regional training programmes are intended to complement and supplement local training provision organised by LEAs and other bodies and to act as a stimulus to local initiatives in the field. They also have an important part to play in bringing together practitioners at regional level and encouraging staff development. The Unit also intends that as many practitioners as possible should have the opportunity to take part in regional training, both as members of a planning team and as participants, rather than concentrate exclusively on the indepth training of a limited number of practitioners.

91. A survey of approximately 200 participants attending regional training events in a variety of regions indicated that almost half had not previously attended regional events sponsored by ALBSU and this illustrates the positive role of regional training programmes in reaching new target audiences concerned with literacy and other related basic skills work.

92. The wider remit of ALBSU also indicated that regional training should take account of the needs of staff working in a variety of settings, including colleges of further education, adult training centres, penal establishments and voluntary organisations, with the proviso that such training should be seen as supplementary to that provided locally. For example, although it was envisaged that regional training would provide training opportunities for staff concerned with the educational elements of special government funded training programmes (i.e. Youth Opportunities Programme), it was not intended that this provision should be anything more than a limited stimulus to authorities and colleges who have the responsibility for providing training opportunities for their staff involved in this work.

93. In this respect, the stimulus role of regional training programmes appeared to operate effectively in most regions in 1980/81. Some 16% of those surveyed were employed as lecturers in colleges of further education, often involved in 'social and life skills' provision for young people, and 20% of all participants surveyed received information concerning events via their college. Furthermore, reports from RACs indicate that local training provision had often been stimulated by regional events sponsored by ALBSU as part of training programmes.

94. Although the period 1980/81 involved a major review of the Unit's training function and was affected by the delay experienced at the beginning of the Unit's period of operation, a considerable number of training events took place in each region and these are detailed below.

95. REGIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMMES 1980/81

Northern RAC

13/14 June 1980	Numeracy for Survival
8 October 1980	Open Learning Systems
12 November 1980	Inter-Agency Co-operation in the Provision of Literacy and Basic Education Skills
9/10 January 1981	Post Basic Literacy
20/21 February 1981	Numeracy

North West RAC

9/11 October 1980	Games and Simulations
7/9 November 1980	Social and Life Skills (A)
5/7 December 1980	Social and Life Skills (B)
17 January 1981 and 7 March 1981	Problems of Immigrants in Adult Literacy
7 February 1981	Young People and the Police, 'Social and Life Skills Materials'
12 February 1981	Special Needs
6 March 1981	Micro-Computers in Numeracy
13/15 March 1981	Games and Simulations (repeat)
14 and 24 March 1981	Social Life and Coping Skills
26 March 1981	Language Needs of Unemployed Immigrants
3 April 1981	Micro-Computers in Numeracy
4/5 April 1981	Social and Life Skills (A)
4 April 1981	Special Needs of different disadvantaged groups
11/12 April 1981	Social and Life Skills (B)

Yorkshire and Humberside RAC

28/30 November 1980	Communication Skills
22/23 January 1981	Communication Skills
13/15 February 1981	Computational Skills
20 March 1981	Publicity and Recruitment

West Midlands RAC

17 July 1980	The Use of Video Programmes in Adult Literacy
18 September 1980	Numeracy
18 October 1980	Adult Basic Skills
25 November 1980	Regional Consultative Conference
31 January 1981	Spelling and Handwriting
7/8 February 1981	Black English
21 February 1981	Management of Adult Literacy Groups
6 March 1981	Asians within LEA Literacy Schemes
7 March 1981	Intelligent Adults with Language Difficulties
27 March 1981	Asians within LEA Literacy Schemes (repeat)

East Midlands RAC

22 November 1980	Counselling
5 December 1980	Assessing your Student
9/11 January 1981	Numeracy
7 February 1981	Counselling (repeat)
21 February 1981	Counselling (repeat)
20/22 March 1981	Social and Life Skills

Wales

28/30 November 1980	The Tutor and the Groups
23/25 January 1981	Numeracy and Literacy in FE
27/29 March 1981	Numeracy and Literacy in FE (repeat)
3/5 April 1981	Widening Horizons Course

East Anglian RAC

7/8 July 1980	Regional Consultation on Adult Basic Education
1 December 1980	Where Have We Got To, Where Are We Going?
7 February 1981	Language and Coping Skills for Ethnic Minorities
14 March 1981	Numeracy Needs and Know-How

South West RAC

25 October 1980	Organisation and Structure of Adult Basic Education Provision
8 November 1980	Organisation and Structure of Adult Basic Education Provision (repeat)
22 November 1980	Organisation and Structure of Adult Basic Education Provision (repeat)
5/7 December 1980	Numeracy
20/22 March 1981	Aspects of the Organisation and Management of the Provision of Basic Education for Adults

Southern RAC

17 June 1980	Regional Conference on Adult Basic Education
28 October 1980	Dyslexia
5 November 1980	Communication and Social Skills
31 January 1981	Three Approaches to Spelling
6/8 February 1981	Introduction to Counselling
14 February 1981	Getting Work
17/18 February 1981	Counselling Skills
7 March 1981	Aspects of Numeracy

London/Home Counties RAC

10 February 1981	Basic Education Skills for Mentally Handicapped Adults
20/22 February 1981	Numeracy
27/29 March 1981	Basic Skills in the Context of YOP

Of the 64 events that took place in the 10 regions of England and Wales, 17 were residential two day events, 8 were residential 24 hour events and 39 were single day events.

96. ALBSU staff made some 31 visits to regions in connection with regional training, including attendance at 13 events, and the Unit spent £57,658 of its grant on the sponsorship of regional training programmes which represented just over 12% of the total expenditure of the Unit in 1980/81.

97. The operation of regional training programmes has been marked by the co-operation between ALBSU, Regional Advisory Councils, LEAs and local practitioners and much of the success of programmes has been due to this close co-operation. The Unit is responsible for the general direction and operation of programmes, RACs are concerned with their co-ordination and administration and local practitioners play an active role in the planning and organisation of each programme and of specific events within the programme. ALBSU believes that this approach, developed by central units since 1976, provides effective, low cost, training that supplements, stimulates and supports the training provided by LEAs. Moreover, this participatory approach leaves much of the initiative and responsibility for training in the hands of practitioners rather than vesting it in the hands of a few supposed experts.

98. The survey of approximately 200 participants involved in regional training carried out by ALBSU indicates, albeit tentatively, the diversity of those involved.

1. <i>Current Post</i>	Organiser/Co-ordinator	28%
	Tutor	54%
	FE teacher	16%
	Prison Education staff	2%
2. <i>Type of Post</i>	Full-time	42%
	Part-time	53%
	Full-time but part-time in basic skills	5%
3. <i>Length of Time in Current Post</i>	Less than 1 year	33%
	1 – 2 years	14%
	2 – 3 years	17%
	Over 3 years	36%
4. <i>Paid Hours of Part-time staff</i>	Less than 5 hours per week	46%
	5 – 10 hours per week	31%
	11 – 15 hours per week	13%
	16 – 20 hours per week	6.5%
	Over 20 hours per week	3.5%

The events surveyed included events aimed at further education staff involved in basic skills provision, penal and probation staff and numeracy practitioners and it should be stressed that the present picture is at best tentative.

99. As well as sponsoring programmes of regional training throughout England and Wales, ALBSU also sponsored a residential training workshop for voluntary organisations concerned with student involvement in adult literacy schemes organised by the National Federation of Voluntary Literacy Schemes.

100. On 28 May, 1980 the Unit mounted a one-day National Conference entitled 'Conference '80'. The Conference, which was attended by over 250 elected members, senior officers and practitioners aimed to:

- set the context in which the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit will operate
- consider the further development of adult literacy and related basic skills work
- provide a forum for discussion and debate.

The Conference was chaired by the Chairman of the Unit's Management Committee, Kenneth Brooksbank and the keynote address was given by Dr Rhodes Boyson, MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department of Education and Science. Dr Boyson said that the establishment of the new Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit, with guaranteed funding for at least three years, was a clear indication of the importance the Government attached to this area of work. In spite of the need for economic restraint, the Government hoped to increase in future years the £500,000 grant made to the Unit in 1980/81. Dr Boyson felt that illiteracy and permanent ill-health were the greatest deprivations and said that 'Men and women who cannot read and write suffer continual isolation in our society'. Dr Boyson stressed that while local education authorities had to decide their own priorities, they should do all they could to support adult literacy and numeracy courses. He said that 'unlike some areas of adult education, this area can never be self-supporting. It is distinctive and different. Its students tend to be economically and socially disadvantaged. To withdraw provision or, in some ways worse, offer it at charges which take it out of the reach of those who most need it, is to deny to a regrettably large group many of the benefits of our developed society'. He added that special thanks must be given to the volunteers who help to teach, but stressed that volunteers needed adequate professional support and should not be seen as a cheap alternative. Conference '80 also included an address by Alan Wells, Head of the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit, who outlined the Unit's role and some possible developments for the future, and presentations by three different speakers who outlined some initiatives in basic education.

101. The Unit also mounted, as part of its training function, two Numeracy Workshops in Newcastle and Oxford respectively. The Workshops aimed:

- to offer practical help in the teaching of numeracy to adults
- to provide ideas and suggestions for the selection and training of tutors and volunteers

and attempted to fulfil these aims by providing activity based sessions in which participants could examine, experiment and evaluate different aspects of basic maths teaching, including suitable materials. The Workshops were heavily oversubscribed and thus some practitioners were not able to be allocated one of the 80 available places at each Workshop. This demand alone demonstrated the need to attach high priority to the development of numeracy work with adults including the provision of training opportunities and the publication of appropriate material both of which feature prominently in ALBSU's work programme for 1981/2.

Publications

102. In 1980/81 ALBSU continued the practice set by ALRA and ALU by publishing a limited amount of material aimed at complementing material produced by publishers, as well as filling gaps that were not likely to be filled by commercial organisations. Unit publications were sold at cost and were distributed by the Unit to practitioners working throughout England and Wales.

103. A regular ALBSU Newsletter was produced bi-monthly and built on the success of the ALU Newsletter issued between 1978 and 1980. The ALBSU Newsletter was expanded from 8 to 12 pages to take account of the wider area of interest of the Unit and included a four page insert that, while distributed with the Newsletter, could be used separately. Each issue of the Newsletter contained features on the Unit's work, including reports on special development projects, as well as practical material and the circulation in 1980/81 rose from 32,000 of issue No. 1 to 35,000 by issue No. 4. Much of this increase in circulation was due to requests for copies of the Newsletter from Colleges of Further Education, Adult Training Centres, Youth Opportunity Schemes and other organisations.

104. In July 1980, the Unit published jointly with Friends Centre, Brighton a worksheet pack entitled 'From Wages to Windscale'. This pack arose from a special development project sponsored by the Adult Literacy Unit and contained advice on worksheets and their use, as well as 60 sample worksheets for use by tutors and students working in basic education.

105. In 1979 the Adult Literacy Unit had produced a handbook for Scheme Consultants working with Community Industry about the basic educational needs of Community Industry's Young Employees. The production of that handbook raised considerable interest, particularly as it was felt to have relevance outside of Community Industry in the wider field of work experience with young adults. Thus, in March 1981, ALBSU produced 'Literacy, Numeracy and the Young Trainee' in conjunction with the Basic Skills Unit of the National Extension College, which was intended for Supervisors and others fulfilling a similar role in the Youth Opportunities Programme. This handbook was not intended as a course book, nor did it attempt to encourage supervisors to become teachers, but rather aimed to demonstrate how literacy and numeracy are part of work experience and how supervisors can take account of these basic skills in doing their job.

106. Just after the end of the 1980/81 financial year, ALBSU published 'Adult Literacy Unit Development Projects 1978/1980', which describes the work of the 35 Special Development Projects sponsored by ALU between April 1978 and March 1980. The book also outlined ALU's approach to the sponsorship of projects in general and attempted to draw some lessons that could be of benefit to other sponsoring agencies as well as to those involved in similar work in central and local government. The book also drew together some threads culled from the projects as a whole and pointed to the need for further development.

107. The Unit also published jointly with the Department of Energy a basic education pack on energy conservation. The pack was produced by a small

group convened by ALBSU containing literacy practitioners as well as representatives of the Department of Energy and was launched at a reception at the Department of Energy attended by John Moore MP, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Energy. The Energy Pack, with a foreword by the Secretary of State, David Howell MP, provided a range of activities of varying difficulty concerned with saving energy in four main areas — at home, setting up home, transport and work.

108. The preparation of a number of other publications began in 1980/81 although they were not due to be published until 1981/82, including a handbook for numeracy practitioners, a book on group teaching in basic education and a booklet intended to assist craft instructors in colleges and skills centres with basic skills tuition. The Unit also took over the publication of 'The Concept of Success in Adult Literacy' by Dr A H Charnley and Professor H A Jones and issued a second edition.

109. On 8 September 1980 the Unit issued a poster with the theme 'Literacy — the Key to Development', to mark International Literacy Day, which has been celebrated throughout the world since its inception by UNESCO in 1966. ALBSU also produced car stickers and a press release, which received media coverage. The Unit also commissioned a new exhibition consisting of 28 black and white free standing boards relating to the growth of adult literacy and other basic skills provision in England and Wales, and demand for this exhibition from local schemes has been constant during the year.

110. ALBSU produced an information leaflet on the work of the Unit for wider distribution as well as publicity leaflets about adult literacy which could be given out by local adult literacy schemes. A special pamphlet was issued to assist with the 1981 Census and some 30,000 copies were distributed to literacy schemes and colleges. Finally, a number of books originally published by ALRA were re-published with minor alterations by ALBSU.

111. In 1980/81 ALBSU sold 11,123 copies of its publications and received £11,663 in income. The number of sales was the highest achieved by any of the national units that have operated since 1975 and indicates the interest in material published by the Unit. The Unit is particularly grateful to Peter Freeman and the staff of Studio 21 who have been responsible for the design of the Unit's publications — a design which has been much praised.

General Work and Liaison

112. A great deal of general work has also been undertaken by the Unit including dealing with enquiries about literacy and basic skills, providing information and serving on a limited number of committees. ALBSU Field Consultants continued to serve on the City and Guilds Subject Committees for Communication Skills and Numeracy and the RSA Numeracy Committee and the Head of Unit served on the basic maths research sub-committee of the Advisory Council for Adult and Continuing Education.

113. The Unit has also had a great deal of contact with similar organisations overseas including the exchange of newsletters and publications (some countries receive copies of the Unit's Newsletter). In this connection ALBSU

has received a number of overseas visitors, where time allowed, many of them via the British Council.

114. ALBSU has developed its relationship with other interested bodies and has had regular meetings with the Manpower Services Commission, the BBC and IBA, the National Federation of Voluntary Literacy Schemes, the Basic Skills Unit of the National Extension College and other similar organisations. The Unit has also continued to have a good working relationship with its parent body, the National Institute of Adult Education. Regular meetings have taken place between the Director of NIAE and the Head of Unit, as well as attendance by the Head of Unit at meetings of the NIAE Executive. The Unit is particularly grateful for the support and assistance it has received from the officers and members of the NIAE.

115. During 1980/81 ALBSU established a Consultative Committee with members drawn from a wide field of interest which aimed to:

- advise the Unit on adult literacy and basic skills in general
- assist in identifying areas of concern and development and to advise on appropriate action
- to act as 'a sounding board' to the Unit

The Committee has held three full meetings since November 1980, as well as various meetings of small sub-committees to consider both short and long term areas of concern in more detail and report back to the main Committee. The minutes of the Consultative Committee have also been received by the Unit's Management Committee on a regular basis (for membership of the Consultative Committee see Appendix 3)

Special Development Projects

116. A major proportion of the grant made available to the Unit in 1980/81 was earmarked for the sponsorship of Special Development Projects with LEAs or other organisations. In order to inform LEAs and voluntary bodies, Guidelines for Special Development Projects were drawn up and circulated and these Guidelines suggested that in the first instance it might be useful for submitting organisations to send to the Unit a 'letter of intent' setting out briefly a possible proposal to be sponsored by ALBSU.

117. 'Letters of Intent' received were considered by the Unit and a decision was taken as to whether to pursue the proposal. Although the Unit did not definitively reject proposals at this stage, the difficulties or problems envisaged were pointed out to the organisation concerned. Many proposals were not pursued positively for a variety of reasons including that they

- fell outside ALBSU's remit
- lacked a sufficient level of innovation in a national or regional context
- involved work that should rightly be seen as a local responsibility
- involved the replacement of work which had been discontinued because of a local cut-back in provision
- duplicated, with little amendment, previous projects sponsored by the Adult Literacy Unit or ALBSU
- were not considered to be well conceived

118. When a project was not felt to be worth pursuing positively, the Unit considered that it was better to be open and honest at the outset rather than encourage an organisation to undertake the time consuming process of drawing up a full proposal which was not likely to gain sponsorship.

When a 'Letter of Intent' contained a proposal which was considered worthy of further discussion, a meeting was arranged for this purpose. After this initial meeting, a draft proposal was usually submitted, although some submitting bodies withdrew at this stage for a variety of reasons, including the need to continue appropriate provision when ALBSU sponsorship ceased. Others became involved in a lengthy local consultation process and were not able to submit a draft application for some time. The Unit commented on draft proposals and visited the proposed project area before a final proposal was produced and considered by the Unit's Management Committee.

119. By 31 March 1981, the Unit had received 154 project proposals in the form of 'Letters of Intent' from 111 LEAs and voluntary organisations and the Head of Unit and Field Consultants had made 29 visits in connection with proposals as well as attending 40 meetings with representatives of organisations involved. Of these proposals, 33 were submitted and 30 were approved, including 3 which were approved as grant aid to national voluntary bodies under Sections 3 (e) of the Unit's Memorandum of Arrangements. The regional breakdown of 'Letters of Intent' was as follows:

Northern region	7 received	1 approved
North West region	20 received	3 approved
Yorkshire region	14 received	6 approved
West Midlands region	11 received	2 approved
East Midlands region	8 received	1 approved
Wales	5 received	1 approved
East Anglian region	10 received	3 approved
South West region	14 received	2 approved
Southern region	11 received	0 approved
London region	40 received	8 approved
National/Misc	14 received	3 approved
	154 received	30 approved

120. The involvement of the Unit's Management Committee in this process has been crucial and has involved detailed and considered judgement of the merits of each submission as well as an attempt to balance the geographical and interest spread of projects sponsored by the Unit. The Committee has also received details of all of the 'Letters of Intent' submitted to the Unit on a regular basis. The Unit recognises the difficulties involved in sponsoring projects in a situation where only a limited number of submissions can be approved and that this entails some disappointment as well as a number of viable projects which, due to the limitations contained in ALBSU's remit, have not been able to be sponsored.

121. Each Special Development Project sponsored by the Unit has been monitored during its period of sponsorship in order to consider the progress made by the project as well as to provide an overall evaluation of each project's

effectiveness. Part of this evaluation and monitoring process has involved at least four visits a year by one of ALBSU's Field Consultants as well as more informal and irregular contact by telephone or letter. These visits, as well as providing an opportunity for the Unit to see the progress of each project, also provided an opportunity for the project workers to seek the advice of the Field Consultant concerning the operation of the project and its possible development. Usually visits by Unit staff to sponsored projects are followed by a written report from the Unit to the project. Additionally, it is a condition of sponsorship that each project submits a written report of the progress made during the year as well as an interim report half yearly.

122. The Unit believes that any evaluation of projects needs to recognise the paramount importance of the stated *aims and objectives* of the project and to what extent these have been fulfilled when Unit sponsorship ceases. Evaluation also needs to recognise that some aims may have changed and some objectives may have been modified during the period of operation of the project. The Unit also emphasises the importance of the qualitative aspects of each project's work without negating the need for quantitative information and statistical data where appropriate. Further, the Unit encourages the view that evaluation should be seen as an integral part of each project and should be a continuous process throughout the life of the project.

123. Evaluation should involve the views of all of those connected with the project, including the student or potential student, the staff, tutors or other workers, representatives of the organisation mounting the project and the staff of the Unit. It is important, therefore, that the experience of the people taking part is seen in human terms and opportunity is provided for the collection of comments, however subjective. The Unit also recognises that much of the evaluation of projects will be subjective and involve the staff of each project in some, often self-critical appraisal, as well as involving the Unit in a critical analysis of its role and function in relation to particular projects.

124. The following projects were sponsored in 1980/81:

Bedfordshire Probation Service	page 47
The Education Through Care Project	
Bradford Library Service	page 47
Literacy Tutor for Books and Information Library Bus	
Bristol WEA	page 35
A Second Chance to Learn	
Buckinghamshire Education Authority	page 49
Numeracy Project	
Cambridgeshire Education Authority	page 49
The Cambridgeshire Post Basic Certificate Course	
Coventry Education Authority	page 51
Materials Development Project	
Devon Education Authority	page 52
Transition Scheme for Mentally Handicapped Young People	

Doncaster Education Authority Basic Education for Mentally Handicapped Adults	page 53
Essex Education Authority Developing Basic Skills with Dysphasic Adults	page 53
Friends Centre, Brighton Study to Work Project	page 38
Hereford & Worcester Education Authority Project Employ	page 54
Inner London Education Authority ESL/Literacy for Second Language Speakers	page 55
Leeds Education Authority Radio Leeds Project	page 56
Leeds Education Authority Development of the 'Drop-In' Centre	page 57
Liverpool Education Authority Partnership Outreach Project	page 58
NACRO, Manchester Employment Skills Project	page 40
Northamptonshire Education Authority The Corby Adult Vocational and Educational Advisory Centre	page 44
Northern Council for FE Flexible Learning Opportunities in Basic Education	page 59
National Union of Public Employees Language and Literacy Courses for Manual Workers	page 60
Parents Centre, Newham Basic Skills Programme for the Unemployed	page 61
Peckham Bookplace 'Drop-In Numeracy' Service	page 62
Salford Education Authority Work Related Basic Skills Courses for the Unemployed	page 63
Sheffield Education Authority Adult Basic Education in the Inner City	page 64
Sheffield Gypsy Support Group Drop In Literacy Centre	page 66
Tower Hamlets Training Forum Clothing Skills Training Workshop Development Project	page 67
Walk In Numeracy Project Mathshop Project	page 68
Welsh Referral Service The DOLEN Project	page 69

125. In 1980/81 the Unit, as well as monitoring all of its sponsored projects, attempted to look at four projects in more detail. These projects were selected largely because they had been approved relatively early in 1980/81 and had thus been operating for some time, rather than for presenting any particular picture. Although they are not therefore representative, the Unit believes that these rather more detailed evaluations highlight the quality of the work being undertaken by ALBSU sponsored projects. The projects concerned were organised by:

Bristol WEA
Friends Centre, Brighton
NACRO, Manchester
Northamptonshire Education Authority

Bristol WEA

A Second Chance to Learn

126. The Second Chance Project is a new venture for the unemployed — people who are newly unemployed, mothers at home bringing up children, people who have not worked for some time or those who are considering some kind of further education. The only entry qualification is enthusiasm.

127. Bristol WEA, sponsored by ALBSU, has established two post-basic literacy courses, one in the St. Paul's area, near to the city centre and the other on a council estate on the southern outskirts of Bristol. The Project began in the St. Paul's area at the end of January and the second group was formed at the end of March.

128. The course offers a wide range of activities, including:

- looking for and applying for jobs
- interviewing and selection
- keeping a job, income tax, trade unions
- handling money, using leisure
- writing skills, spelling, number, maths
- communication, self expression
- working on your own and with other people

as well as a chance to try different types of educational courses such as

- history
- photography
- art and design

As an example of work involving history and art design, both groups visited an exhibition showing the history of the TUC at a local museum. This was the first time members of the two groups had met one another. The banners were a prominent feature and several members of the St. Paul's group showed particular interest. The following week a silk screen session had been arranged as a 'taster' and during this and the next two weeks the St. Paul's group experimented with the medium and finally designed and made a 'St. Paul's banner' — which was proudly displayed at a fair in Bristol a few weeks later. Some

members of the Second Chance groups helped to man the WEA stall, where their banner was displayed. They had a chance to publicise Second Chance and to interest potential students.

129. At present a six week Radio Programme course is being held each Tuesday morning at St. Matthias College — it is for any student of Second Chance. There has been a good response from the students. The aim is to gain enough knowledge and expertise to make a radio programme about Second Chance later on in the course. One of the tutors has contacts with the local radio which is very willing to co-operate by broadcasting the programme when it is available.

130. The Certificate of Continuing Education — the product of another project sponsored by ALBSU and now accepted by the RSA — is to be piloted at Second Chance in September. Students have shown a keen interest although the number who will actually take it has yet to be decided. It is an interesting example of the links between ALBSU projects whereby students from one project become involved in piloting the work of an earlier one.

131. There has been little difficulty in attracting students, most of whom have been recruited from existing literacy schemes, TSD preparatory courses and through referral from Social Services and the Probation and After Care Services. Coverage on television and Radio Bristol and an article in a local community arts magazine also helped to publicise the course. However, the course tutors were disappointed by the lack of response from those agencies most closely involved with the unemployed — the Job Centres and the DHSS — although they realise that considerable time is needed for publicity to be fully effective. In the short time the courses have been in existence, a wide range of people of all ages and abilities have shown interest and 27 people now regularly attend the two courses which are held in local community centres.

132. The overall aim of each course is to encourage self-reliance, confidence and a mature attitude towards education and the project staff hope that by the end of the course, students will have:

- developed numeracy and oracy skills in addition to improving literacy
- increased their understanding of how to find and keep a job
- developed awareness of ways in which the quality of their lives can be improved through, for example, positive use of leisure time
- increased their ability to work alone, or in co-operation with others
- developed the ability to think critically and to communicate effectively
- acquired a knowledge of the sources of support available and the confidence to draw on them.

133. Tutors have become aware of the need for a great deal of personal support for many of their students. To help deal with some of the problems which, if not directly caused by unemployment, are certainly exacerbated by it, the course tutors have developed links with 'Off the Record', a counselling service in Bristol. The tutors hope that this service will be able to provide continuing support after the course finishes.

Tutors have established an excellent rapport with their students, who accept and trust them as friends but this means that students naturally turn to their tutors for help and advice when problems arise outside the scope of the course. The tutors feel that although they are ready to be sympathetic listeners, they often do not have the counselling skills required, so the links with 'Off the Record' are very useful.

134. Of the students who have been involved at the two Centres, 25 are female and 24 male and their age range is as follows:—

Age	No.
Under 20 years	4
20-30 years	25
31-40 years	9
41-50 years	10
Over 50 years	1
Total:	49

Eighteen of the students continue to attend regularly whilst some of remainder have moved as follows:—

Work	TOPS	FE	Disablement & Resettlement Centre	Left County
6	6	3	1	1

Students were moved to enrol on the courses as a result of:—

Project Leaflet	Radio Bristol	Referral by				
		Job Centre	Social Services	Literacy etc	Community Centre	TSD
11	7	3	4	6	4	5

135. The staff maintain that any evaluation should include the students own assessment, combined with that of the staff. It is stressed, for example, that in some cases the mere fact that students come to groups — i.e. got up and arrived in time — after six or more months of unemployment — was a significant sign of progress. Feedback from students has been positive so far, since they feel the work is useful and enjoyable in most cases. All are now keeping a personal diary as well as a group record and some are beginning to do extra work at home.

136. The Project was approved in December 1980 for a one year period ending in December 1981.

Friends Centre, Brighton

Study to Work Project

137. The Study to Work Project sponsored in July 1980 for two years aimed to explore the educational needs of the long term unemployed, with particular reference to those who had been unemployed for six months or more. This was achieved by the provision of pilot courses, adapted to the needs of such a group, including courses at different times of day and spread over different periods of time. It was felt that some students would require immediate short term support, while others may require a longer course to meet their educational needs.

138. The Project was approved in July 1980 and the two tutor organisers were appointed very soon afterwards. They have thus been in post a little over a year and have directed their attention towards recruitment of and provision for those who fit the criteria of the project. The Project began by assessing the unemployment situation in the area and contacting agencies such as the Training Services Division (TSD), the Probation and Social Services and the adult education service. The two project workers sought advice and co-operation in publicising the Study to Work courses and attracting potential students; leaflets were distributed and the local newspaper and the radio station carried items on the project.

139. In spite of this, recruitment was slow at first, but after holding an Open Day in the local Job Centre, the project workers found that they were receiving a great many enquiries. Some who came forward did not fall into the category of the long term unemployed and were referred to other educational or training provision. However, many were long term unemployed and required help in literacy, numeracy and basic skills. A timetable of tuition was therefore set up and has now been running for more than a year.

140. The Project has discovered that the group that has been identified requires help over a rather longer period than had been supposed. Students appear to prefer tuition which is spread over a few days each week rather than concentrated into one day, and appear to need to remain on a course for more than one term (one of the options offered originally). Liaison with the local Job Centre has also been found to be a successful method of recruiting students.

141. The target set in the first year was of 100 potential students to be contacted and interviewed with between 36 and 60 expected to make some use of the course provision offered. In mid-July 1981 when the formal course programme ended and the supplementary summer provision was introduced, the records show that 127 potential students had been interviewed of whom 28 were currently on courses, 52 had been on courses and 10 were on the waiting list. Of the remainder, 11 of those interviewed were considered unsuitable for the provision available and were given advice about possible alternatives whilst 26 having been interviewed and accepted did not take up the offer of a place on a course when this became available. Of those who participated in courses and classes offered by the Study to Work Project, 14 obtained employment and ceased to attend the classes, whilst 9 went on to other courses, usually pre TOPS or TOPS. Of the remainder, 3 left the area and 26 ceased to attend the

course for a variety of reasons. These reasons included satisfaction with the standard reached, maternity, difficulty in meeting the cost of travel to the Centre and in one or two instances, where attendance followed other literacy work, dissatisfaction with the course.

142. *Composition of Students past and present — total 80*

1. Sex					
Female 27	Male 53				
2. Age					
Under 20	20/25	25/35	35/45	45/55	over 55
8	16	25	26	3	2
3. Length of time unemployed at date interviewed					
5-6 months	6-12 months	over 12 months	two years or more		
22	22	14	22		
4. Referral point					
TSD Schemes	Job Centre	Media publicity	Probation Service		
6	48	8	2		
Personal Friend	Voluntary Groups	Careers Service			
4	11	1			

143. *Notes*

1. The male/female ratio has shifted quite markedly, being approximately 4:1 for past students but 4:3 for current students.
2. A much higher proportion of current students are in the older age groups with the largest being 35/45 years. Amongst past students the largest age group was 25/35 years.
3. A number of students entered courses following preTOPS or TOPS provision in order to maintain standards whilst awaiting further training and job opportunities.
4. Most referrals were from Brighton Job Centre but some of the Job Centre referrals also came from Hove and one from Lewes.
5. Media publicity includes Brighton Radio and the Brighton 'Argus'.
6. The voluntary groups include literacy schemes and local community organisations.
7. An analysis of students' objectives showed that 36 were seeking either to prepare for preTOPS or TOPS tests, in some cases having already failed, or were maintaining standards already achieved on such courses, whilst 13 indicated that attendance was expected to improve job prospects. 12 students sought specific assistance with literacy and 8 with maths.
8. Of the fifty-two students who attended classes at the Centre and who no longer attend, almost half were successful in moving into a job or onto a course which was likely to more specifically increase their job opportunities. Of the remainder, a number had achieved their personal objectives and ceased to attend whilst others could have benefitted from a longer period of tuition.
9. A feature of some concern arising from the limited nature of the course provision on a pilot project is the large number who, having been interviewed and accepted, failed to attend when a place became available. There is obviously a very real need to offer early opportunity for

attendance to all those who, having made an approach for entry, have been accepted as suitable. The waiting time, often a number of weeks, is a significant factor in pre-participation drop-out. Of similar significance is the need to ensure continuity of contact and avoid breaks during holiday periods if at all possible.

10. Among the most positive aspects of the first year's work is the value of a good relationship with local Job Centres and their understanding of the value of the course work undertaken at the Project. The links with TSD provision are clear with a significant number of students moving on to preTOPS or TOPS courses. Others having completed such courses find it useful to follow the courses provided by the Project in order to maintain standards whilst awaiting the next stage or a job.

144. The Project was approved in June 1980 for a two year period of sponsorship.

NACRO, Manchester

Employment Skills Project

145. The NACRO Education Unit in Manchester operates an educational advisory service for probation and prison education officers and a number of basic skills projects for offenders and ex-offenders. The educational provision of the Unit was extended in November 1980 by the appointment of an employment skills tutor as part of a project sponsored by ALBSU, to be responsible for developing services and facilities to improve the employment prospects of probation clients, individuals released from custodial sentences and other students using the Unit. The tutor is based at NACRO's Education Unit and has been able to build on contacts already established by the Unit's team and in particular activities such as the 'Competing for Jobs' course.

146. With the general shrinkage of opportunities for full time work, training or alternatives to work, ex-offenders experience more difficulty than most in finding jobs. The Project hopes to provide a range of courses and advice for clients and probation and prison service workers to help to overcome at least some of these difficulties.

147. The aims of the Project are to:

- * develop employment seeking skills with offenders seeking help with basic education
- * discover their individual educational and social needs
- * develop course materials which will be helpful and useful
- * produce a manual of ideas for use on Employment Skills courses
- * test this manual in the field and modify in the light of experience

148. In the ten months since the tutor was appointed, considerable progress has been made in achieving a number of detailed aims of the Project. The early part of the Project concentrated on visiting and meeting people, projects and organisations; the probation service, probation hostels, APEX (a job finding

agency for ex-offenders), LIFELINE, (a day centre for drug users and abusers), NACRO YOP and Onward Workshops, the prison service and the Training, Employment and Careers Services.

149. The 'Competing for Jobs' course has effectively been integrated into part of the overall NACRO provision in Manchester and the tutor has been instrumental in encouraging and assisting staff at a number of probation offices where short courses have been established for clients to help to prepare them for employment. In addition, an interim package of materials and supporting information for employment skills courses has been prepared and circulated. Its value is being monitored by the probation staff in their short courses and also by staff in a number of penal establishments. It is hoped that after piloting in the field these materials will form the basis of a tutor's resource guide. Reports on the use of the material so far have been favourable and great interest has been aroused in Manchester and surrounding areas.

150. Apart from establishing courses and activities, the Project aims to produce the type of course materials mentioned above. They will be for both students and workers and the main focus will be on the skills required to find employment. To date, the programme of work has developed in three main areas:

151. *TOPS/Maths Sessions at the Education Unit*

This course is principally for students wanting to pass a specific test. Volunteers provide tuition on a 1:1 basis for the nine students who are currently attending. The aim of most students is short term and two have already passed employment or training entrance tests. It is hoped that additional provision, such as literacy classes linked to employment, can also be provided to build up a package of courses as part of existing options at the Education Unit.

Competing for Jobs

152. This course provides advice on selecting jobs, personal information sheets, using the telephone, applications and interviews. Each two hour weekly session gives information and includes activities and exercises on practical skills designed to increase the students' self confidence. The course is based on the premise that job hunting is like a race; to win one has to compete and the harder and more efficiently one competes, the greater the chance of winning. Two 'Competing for Jobs' courses have now been completed. The need for additional literacy tuition became apparent during the second course and extra volunteer tutors have been recruited for this purpose. Another important need which the course highlighted was how to encourage students to use their new or improved skills in job hunting.

153. *Probation and Prison Services*

As part of day centre provision in one probation office, the employment skills tutor was invited to run educational sessions for clients. Students, probation officers and the tutor discussed which topics would be most useful and, for several weeks, ran sessions on social security, recent changes in supplementary benefits regulations and 'signing on' and following sessions concentrated on employment skills. At the moment this scheme is under review. Although some

short term gains were apparent, it was clear that students would benefit from a longer term programme.

154. The tutor has actively assisted in the running of short courses by staff at three Probation Offices and has given advice to officers running courses at four other offices.

155.

TABLE OF RESULTS AT END OF COURSE

NO.	RESULT
15	completed the full course
3	obtained work
3	obtained interviews for jobs
4	did not finish the course
Total	25

The tutor has also attended a pre release course at one prison and given pre-release advice interviews at two others. This latter commitment involved interviews on one or more occasions with 30 prisoners.

156. The two courses for which the tutor is responsible, 'Competing for Jobs' and a rolling entry/exit maths for training course entry, show the following involvement:

Sex	No.
Male	48
Female	9
Total:	57

Age	No.
Under 20 years	21
20-25 years	20
26-35 years	9
36-45 years	7
Total:	57

Job Situation	No.
Employed	16
Unemployed:	
under 6 months	19
6-12 months	16
over 12 months	6
Total:	57

Referral Point	No.
NACRO Unit	28
Probation Hostel	4
Probation Office	10
Onward Workshop	15
Total:	57

Of the students attending the 'Competing for Jobs' courses (2), 9 completed the full course and 10 others completed a substantial part. Six of the students entered full-time or part-time work and a further eight obtained job interviews or applied for entry to TOPS.

157. The 26 students attending the maths course had the following objectives:

Student Objective	No.
TOPS Test	19
HMF Test	2
GCE etc.	3
Basic maths	2
Total:	26

Result	No.
Passed TOPS Test	5
Passed Army Test	1
Joined another NACRO Course	1
Awaiting results	1
Still attending course	8
Dropped out (reasons including illness or domestic difficulties)	10
Total:	26

158. Probation and education staff at Strangeways Prison are preparing a course which it is hoped they will be able to run at some time in the future, aimed at young people who are shortly to be released. The NACRO tutor has been involved with prison staff in discussing aims, a scheme of work and in

gathering relevant materials. The education staff are to deal with self care — budgetting, cooking and managing a bedsitter — the probation staff with employment and social skills — accommodation hunting, job seeking and welfare rights. If the course is run the NACRO tutor will provide a follow up service to this course, including liaising with the probation service and the provision of post-release education, as well as monitoring progress of students after leaving prison.

159. The original timetable for the Project envisaged that the first year would be spent developing courses in three probation offices, with the work extending to hostels and prisons in the second year. However, because of the work of the Education Unit, the project tutor is well ahead of schedule. The Project has three probation office projects, with another three or four in developing stage and the course at Strangeways prison is already well developed. Work continues on employment skills within the Unit and the tutor is involved in an advisory capacity, setting up additional projects outside the Unit.

160. It is clear that the work of the tutor has been of considerable value to Probation Officers, who have been concerned to make provision for clients needing help in obtaining employment. This response to the tutor's initiatives, together with the ready support of the NACRO Education Unit, has ensured real progress towards the stated aim of the Project and the provision of a service which could have a much wider use.

161. The Project was approved in July 1980 for a two year period of sponsorship, which began in November 1980.

Northamptonshire County Council: Education Department

162. The Corby Adult Vocational and Educational Advisory Centre

The Special Development Project in Northamptonshire aims to:

- * provide a service for unemployed adults which enables them to obtain a sound assessment of their educational attainment
- * give guidance as to their potential and educational needs
- * provide advice on gaining access to appropriate educational training and vocational opportunities

In order to fulfil this aim the Authority with ALBSU sponsorship set up the Corby Adult Vocational and Educational Advisory Centre, and appointed a Director in January 1981.

163. Corby is a town which has recently experienced a large number of redundancies and the unemployment rate is currently over 20%. The Centre aims to provide an advisory service for the unemployed in Corby and has also identified the need for tuition in basic education.

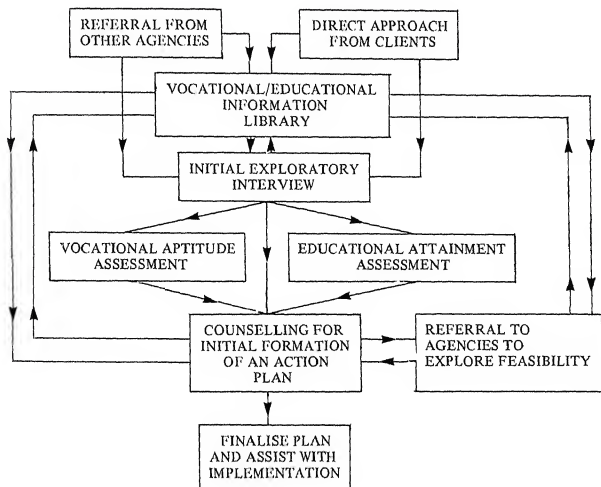
164. People seeking help fall into two main categories:

- * those who have tried to obtain places on retraining schemes but have failed pre-entry tests

- * those who cannot apply for retraining because of educational weaknesses or who are unsure about suitable training opportunities open to them

165. To date, the typical pattern of help offered by the Corby Centre is:

- * discussion to establish the individual's aspirations or objectives
- * assessment of basic education level
- * remedial tuition of 1–2 hours per week in the Centre, with some home assignments
- * aptitude tests to determine the most suitable occupational areas
- * discussion of training and education options
- * practice in pre-entry tests for training courses.



166. The Project will undertake a pilot exercise for a YOPS sponsored Training Workshop. The aim is to determine the value of assessment in streamlining the diagnostic period necessary to establish trainee's aptitudes and interests for the available work experience options. Tests will be used to determine educational attainment, aptitudes and occupational preferences. In this way, it may be possible to be more selective about training, to identify basic educational weaknesses and select appropriate remedial activities in order to increase the individual's chances of employment. This work may have

particular relevance in view of possible changes in national training strategy, resulting in a greater need for a more systematic process for matching abilities and training opportunities within the state sector provision.

167. In seeking to provide assessment, information and advice to those adults who do not have specific training, education or employment objectives, the Centre has made the following assessment tests:—

- * MSC students attending day courses at Tresham College — 76
- * YOP students attending courses at Tresham College — 28
- * Raven Workshop students — 6

In a number of the cases above the students have attended for literacy and numeracy tuition at the Centre following the assessments. In addition to providing this resource for the benefit of students and staff at the institutions mentioned, the Centre has also dealt with 48 individual applicants to the Centre. Of this number, 12 undertook tests and were given advice and did not proceed to tuition at the Centre. Of those who did undertake tuition, 17 were continuing with this work at the beginning of August. Of the 48 clients interviewed, some were clearly satisfied with the results of the test and the advice given and it is known that 6 have obtained entry to skill centre courses and 2 have gone into employment. Among those continuing with tuition there is a variety of objectives with many wishing to improve basic education whilst others have a more specific concern such as entry to the police force or to a TOPS course.

168. The 48 consist of 43 males and 5 females and the ages are as follows:

<u>16 – 19</u>	<u>20 – 25</u>	<u>25 – 40</u>	<u>Over 40</u>
7	16	22	3

They were mainly referred to the Centre by the following agencies:—

<u>Job Centres</u>	<u>Tresham College</u>	<u>Arthur Price Centre</u>	<u>Careers Service</u>
20	9	8	5
<u>Probation Service</u>			
2			

and undertook the following tests:—

<u>Maths A</u>	<u>Maths B</u>	<u>English</u>	<u>Psychometric</u>	<u>Career Interest</u>
26	6	13	20	2

(some clients took 4 of the tests whilst a number did both maths tests.)

169. It is worthwhile noting that the demand for tuition and the success of the work has encouraged the LEA to provide additional teaching resources which, with additional accommodation from the college, will be available from September. As a result of this initiative the Centre will undertake further general publicity in the knowledge that basic education tuition can be made available on site to all those in need.

170. The project was sponsored for a two year period from September 1980.

Bedfordshire Probation Service

The Education Through Care Project

171. Bedfordshire Probation Service has a well established education scheme which has successfully combined education and penal philosophies in its provision. However, an important area of development has recently been identified — the continuation of education in prisons, borstals and detention centres for people after their release.

172. The aim of this project sponsored by ALBSU, is to develop a network and refine processes whereby detainees in need of and receiving educational assistance during sentence, can be effectively referred on release to pursue their legitimate and appropriate objectives and a project assistant has been employed to develop such a network.

173. Many detainees, who have benefitted from tuition in custody, need and want to continue their education after their release. However, various factors — lack of knowledge of types of provision, anxiety or inertia — often prevent ex-offenders from making use of the opportunities that do exist.

174. An initial period of induction will be necessary for the project assistant to become familiarised with the educational facilities available in Bedfordshire, the staff and clients of penal institutions and the Probation Service. From these initial contacts, the project assistant will be able to work with detainees to plan their continuing education after release. This personalised contact will not only help to reduce the inertia or anxiety of the detainees, but will establish a 'release contact'. The concept of 'release contact' is felt to be crucial to this project and it is hoped that through such contact detainees can be encouraged to make 'agreements' to make use of educational opportunities.

175. The sponsorship of this Project for a two year period was approved at the beginning of April 1981.

Bradford Library Service

Literacy Tutor for Books and Information Library Bus

176. A mobile 'drop-in' centre can be a useful asset in extending adult literacy and basic skills provision to disadvantaged communities. Bradford Libraries provide a Books and Information Library Bus Service which operates in inner city areas and outlying housing estates as part of a five year project funded through the Urban Programme. The Bus staff — a librarian, an adviser from Citizens' Advice Bureau and a driver — was increased in October 1980 with special development funding from ALBSU to include a literacy tutor.

177. The main task of the tutor is to provide information and advice on literacy and basic skills to people living in the areas visited by the Bus. Existing materials and books carried on the Bus now include a collection of literacy publications, easy reading materials and other printed matter such as health education leaflets, some in Asian languages, on diet and health care. The tutor has found that English as a second language speakers are more forthcoming

about language and reading difficulties and sometimes older children will ask for teaching materials or information on behalf of their parents.

178. The Bus' new service was publicised by house-to-house visiting cards, leaflets, and through community services and items on Radio Leeds, Pennine Radio and in local newspapers. Time was spent at the beginning of the project making contacts with other local literacy organisers, community workers and librarians — all of whom offered their support. Any venture which operates within the community is seen as a valuable link between people and services. The project tutor has also run sessions for staff at branch libraries on literacy and associated basic skills.

179. The Bus is used for a variety of purposes and consequently, quiet activities, such as teaching or discussion groups are not always easy. However, solutions have been found. As one of the main services is provision of books to under-fives, this is proving a useful way of making contact with parents. When several women from one estate wanted to form a writing group with the tutor, they were able to use a quiet room in the nearby community centre while their children remained on the Bus, playing and listening to stories. Despite publicity, response has been slow and appears to be characteristic of all 'outreach work' — it takes time to be accepted and established in local communities. The staff of the Bus are aware that they are often seen as 'unusual outsiders' and have accepted the fact that initially response will be slow. There are, of course, some practical measures which can be taken to increase response. The Bus workers found that one previously 'slow response stop' has changed dramatically simply by parking in a different place — this new 'bus stop' is now one of the busiest.

180. The project is multi-purpose, involved in many activities and responding to a range of individual needs. There are, however, four aspects of the work of the project which deserve particular mention:

- * Literacy needs are emerging at all levels — both basic and beyond. The people who are coming forward for tuition or help with forms are outnumbered by those borrowing literacy stock as 'normal' reading material
- * English as a Second Language speakers are more forthcoming about language and reading difficulties. Those who are literate in their own language will take Asian as well as easy to read English books
- * Other educational needs involve enquiries about training, hobbies, and voluntary work, mainly from unemployed workers
- * The broader social needs are not difficult to define. The Bus provides a meeting place for people who are normally isolated and wary of traditional community or educational establishments. There is a team approach to problem identification which cuts across the different professional approaches that have been traditionally adopted. This approach also involves the non-professional driver/assistants as equal partners in working with the public and the overall management of the vehicle.

181. Approval was given in July 1980 for a two year period of sponsorship which began in October 1980.

Buckinghamshire Education Authority

Numeracy Project

182. To discover the extent of the real demands for numeracy tuition and the best method of attracting students, a special development project has been sponsored based in the Aylesbury Vale area of Buckinghamshire. A Project Director will be employed from September 1981 to set up and monitor four different recruitment/tuition models in the area and each model will be evaluated according to its effectiveness in attracting students as well as the success or failure of the tuition provided.

183. Market Day in Aylesbury provides a focus for the surrounding rural areas and the population of 47,000 is large enough to support a numeracy 'drop-in' facility. This will form the basis for one tuition model — where numeracy advice and tuition will be available on Market Days i.e. Wednesdays and Fridays. A surplus library mobile van will be used for this purpose.

184. Tandy Corporation have promised to loan the project a microcomputer and appropriate software so that the effectiveness of Computer Assisted Learning may be studied.

185. Industry in Aylesbury is well established and links already exist with the local Industrial Training Centre and the Trades Council. A second tuition model will provide for specific numeracy needs of industry and people in employment.

186. The two remaining models extend outwards to housing estates and the rural area surrounding Aylesbury. In liaison with youth and community workers and social and health service workers on housing estates, the project tutor will establish informal numeracy tuition. The main target group will be mothers with small children, but will also include others with limited incomes who need help with budgeting and basic numeracy skills. At different locations in rural areas, specific short courses and one-off sessions on numeracy will be established. These will be organised and publicised in co-operation with local voluntary and statutory agencies.

187. The project will hopefully provide indicators to the best approaches to numeracy provision in the county and point the way forward for other organisations.

188. The Project was approved at the beginning of April 1981 for a one year period to commence in September 1981.

Cambridgeshire Education Authority

The Cambridgeshire Post Basic Certificate Course

189. Originally sponsored by the Adult Literacy Unit, the Cambridgeshire post basic certificate project has been sponsored by ALBSU for a further year in order that the first course can be completed. During this period, the project has concentrated on three main areas of work.

- * continued support for basic and post basic classes
- * co-operation with the Royal Society of Arts over the assessment procedure for the proposed Certificate of Continuing Education
- * exploration of alternative study patterns for students working on the continuing education syllabus

190. Support for the classes was given by the project worker through visits and telephone conversations with tutors, a daytime meeting of tutors to discuss materials and methods and continued publication of the 'Reach Out' magazine. Despite fluctuating numbers, the remaining students are strongly committed. The Peterborough and Huntingdon courses work to the continuing education syllabus and all plan to enter for the Certificate. In Wisbech three students are following the course, whilst in Cambridge all of the students are following the syllabus, though some are still undecided about entering for the Certificate. Support for volunteer tutors teaching the syllabus to individual students has proved more difficult but some has been given by the organising tutor of the literacy groups.

191. 'Reach Out' the class magazine for the Peterborough group — has been broadened to include work from the Peterborough literacy classes and the Wisbech and Huntingdon groups. The magazine acts as another link between basic and post basic education.

192. There has been renewed liaison with other post basic groups in the county. Two classes have been started by community education tutors in the Huntingdon area and a second post basic group in Cambridge is to adopt the syllabus in the Autumn.

193. The project worker has been negotiating with the Assistant Secretary of the RSA Examinations Board with responsibility for basic level schemes over moderation and assessment of the Certificate. It now seems likely that existing students will obtain their certificates — assessors have made first visits to the classes and have discussed standards and methods with the tutors. It is clear from comments received by the project worker that in its new form the Certificate interests a wide range of tutors and students. This interest is based on a number of factors

- * the continuing education syllabus covers existing basic and post basic work
- * there is no formal examination
- * the flexible assessment arrangements mean that students can determine for themselves the time they will take to cover the syllabus and are able to enter as individuals or from a tuition group.

194. The project will be taken over in July by the RSA, who will operate a pilot stage for the examination course. Far from a lack of take-up in this extension of basic and post basic provision, problems are envisaged in limiting participation by various centres in the piloting of this new Certificate. From September 1981 32 centres throughout England will participate in the RSA pilot scheme.

195. Approval was given in July 1980 for a one year period of sponsorship up to the end of July 1981.

Coventry Education Authority

Materials Development Project

196. The process of producing materials for literacy and basic skills tuition is as important as the end product. The Coventry special development project involves both students and tutors in developing a range of materials that can be used with a number of different groups in basic education. Six institutions are involved in the project each working with different groups of students and on various topics.

- * A group of mentally handicapped students are involved in materials production based on their own experience in a home and also at work and leisure
- * Literacy students at Lanchester Polytechnic are working on the Coventry theme — 'Pride in our Past, Faith in our future'
- * The Industrial Therapy Unit materials are based on the work of the Unit and the social skills required to give confidence to the recovering mentally ill
- * A group of English as a second language students is basing its work on the visit of an Asian family living in London to an English family living in Coventry
- * Tile Hill College of Further Education is focussing its materials, written in simple language, on issues relating to young people on basic education courses
- * Murray Lodge — a community home for boys in care — has begun work on materials linked to a horticultural project. This has had to be modified as each new intake of boys have less ability than the previous group.

197. Regular meetings are held where tutors working in different establishments can discuss progress, sort out problems, and exchange materials to test out with their own groups. Murray Lodge is the only area where any real difficulties have been experienced — finding a suitable person to work on developing materials with new intakes of boys with low ability has not been easy.

198. When materials are prepared by students, it is important that the end result has a professional look. Three of the booklets already produced are being illustrated by a graphics student at Lanchester Polytechnic and the Tile Hill College graphics department will produce the rest of the final materials. Coventry Top Shop is now involved in printing some of the material. The materials produced for the first group have also been able to be adapted for use with the boys at Murray Lodge.

199. Sponsorship for a one year period was approved in September 1980 and the Project began in November 1980.

Devon Education Authority

Transition Scheme for Mentally Handicapped Young People

200. As the recession deepens, job opportunities for the mentally handicapped dwindle at an even greater rate than for the rest of the working population and thus measures are needed to enable these adults to enter the labour market.

201. Devon LEA is establishing a pilot scheme, sponsored jointly by ALBSU, the EEC Social Fund and Devon County Council to assist the transition of young mentally handicapped people from adult training centres to wage earning employment. The scheme is based in two centres, each catering for a number of mentally handicapped adults, with additional educational input provided by the local education service. Each scheme will be staffed by the Training Centre Manager, Unit Workshop supervisors, placement officer, education tutor and clerical staff working as a team.

202. In providing realistic work training experience and education in basic and social skills, the project aims to:

- * prepare trainees for work by choosing the most suitable jobs for each individual and teaching basic job skills, many of which are common to different types of employment
- * enhance the trainees' motivation to learn by developing basic skills in listening, speaking, reading, writing, counting and other number skills
- * develop self confidence, competence and independence through skills training
- * make trainees aware of the importance of safety and hygiene in their lives and at work
- * offer support and training to centre staff on the scheme and acquaint them with its aims
- * enlist the support of local volunteers and employers for the transition scheme
- * link the work training in the centres with outside provision of basic education
- * eventually provide job placements for trainees

The training period is likely to be of a similar length to MSC work experience programmes and the lessons already gained in this area will be utilised by the scheme.

203. The vocational training — including skills in safety awareness, taxation and national insurance — day visits and temporary job placements will provide a basis for the education programme. This will include basic skills training at the two centres and further tuition provided either through link courses at the local colleges or by a tutor based at the Adult Training Centre. Providing experience and tuition in environments other than the training centres is central to the scheme's objective to 'open up the outside world' to the trainees. The teaching in both 1:1 and small groups will use non-traditional methods of simulation, games, discussion and audio-visual recording sessions.

204. The young people who will take part in the scheme will be those who have the potential to enter open employment. Staff at the training centres estimate that 13% of trainees have this potential, given extra training and education in work preparation, basic life and job skills and placement support.

205. The sponsorship of this Project for a two year period was approved in February 1981.

Doncaster Education Authority

Basic Education for Mentally Handicapped People

206. The purpose of the ALBSU sponsored project in Doncaster is to provide basic education for mentally handicapped adults, formerly long-stay hospital patients, now living in hostels or group homes. Many ex-patients are reluctant to return to hospital for basic education — often because they resent having to return to a hospital environment for education classes. The aim of the basic education programme is to enable mentally handicapped adults to cope more successfully in society. Social and educational skills, an understanding and awareness of the demands of adult life and the ability to find and keep a job are particular objectives for each student. A day-to-day supervisor, the Head of a Further Education Centre at the local subnormality hospital and a co-ordinator, the LEA Senior Advisor for Adult Education, work with 10 part time tutors.

207. Thirteen different venues were chosen, ranging from a fairly large hostel to group homes of three or four people. Tutors arrange for the most convenient times for tuition and liaise closely with social workers and hostel wardens. Since the majority of students attend training centres during the day, classes take place in the early evening. The programmes are planned carefully according to the skills available and the needs of students and include frequent changes of activity to generate and maintain a high level of interest among the students.

208. Some difficulties have emerged such as dealing with a wide range of ages and abilities, financial problems arising from lack of understanding of money and occasional alienation of one student from the rest of the group. However, problems were not altogether unexpected, and both tutors and students are finding the work very rewarding.

209. Sponsorship for a one year period was approved in October 1980 and the Project began in February 1981.

Essex Education Authority

Developing Basic Skills with Dysphasic Adults

210. Dysphasia is an impairment of the language function and occurs in people who have suffered strokes — one of the most commonly occurring physical disabilities, particularly in the 45+ age group — or brain damage caused by motor accidents. One third of those surviving strokes or accidental brain damage will have a language problem. Dysphasic adults experience diffi-

culties in listening, comprehending, reading, speaking, writing and have a reduced vocabulary and lack of recall. Many of the techniques used in basic education could be useful in overcoming some of the language problems arising from dysphasia, particularly to develop fluent, legible handwriting, good spelling and comprehension.

211. In Essex, two stroke clubs, catering for 40 dysphasic adults, have requested help from the county's literacy scheme. However, it has been found that sufficient guidance could not be given to volunteer tutors and that a pool of expertise was simply not available. With funding from ALBSU, a special development project is due to start in September 1981 to investigate the teaching methods, organisation and structure of an effective service for dysphasic students in Essex. The project aims to:

- * investigate existing practice in adult basic education for dysphasics in Essex and elsewhere
- * develop links between adult basic education staff, consultants, speech therapists, occupational therapists, volunteers, students and their families
- * draw up preliminary guidelines for appropriate teaching methods and approaches
- * recruit and train a team of volunteers to work with dysphasic students, evaluate the teaching of dysphasics and training given to volunteer tutors with particular reference to a variety of teaching bases — the student's home, the hospital, the stroke club, the adult education centre
- * produce a report probably incorporating final guidelines which can be used on a county basis and possibly distributed throughout the country

212. The project will be monitored by a steering committee of representatives of the area health and education authorities, volunteers and ALBSU. The county's adult basic education scheme and the area health authority's existing services for stroke patients will provide additional support.

213. Approval was given at the beginning of April 1981 for a one year period of sponsorship, to commence in September 1981.

Hereford & Worcestershire Education Authority

Project Employ

214. The transition from school to college of further education can be difficult for many school leavers, although greater co-operation between school and college staffs before youngsters leave school can help to make that transition smoother.

215. A project sponsored by ALBSU in collaboration with the Hereford and Worcester LEA aims to investigate the needs of those of school leaving age whose chances of obtaining further training or employment are limited by their abilities in literacy and numeracy.

216. The project is designed to explore various teaching methods and the feasibility of an integrated approach to literacy, numeracy, communications and life skills — spanning both departmental and subject boundaries. Specialist staff will undertake a programme of teaching, examine ways of modifying existing teaching practices and implementing innovative methods. It is hoped that new approaches with the help of careers counselling will help to build up students' confidence, motivation and self image.

217. Courses started in January 1981 in the two schools involved in the project and will run for five months. All the students chosen were expected to obtain grade 3/4 in CSE examinations, although the majority, for some reason, were not making the progress expected of them and one of the project's aims is to discover the reason for this. Both colleges involved have lowered their entry requirements to include grades 3/4 CSE. One college has planned a new one year full time Certificate of Further Education course with two vocational elements in engineering and community studies. The other college plans a one year pre-nursing course leading to State Enrolled Nurse courses at local hospitals or 'O' level courses at the College. The new courses will include nine hours specialised tuition in literacy, numeracy and communications, geared to the requirements of 'Project Employ'.

218. Already, encouraging results in the use of positive remedial techniques have emerged as well as problem areas common to both schools and colleges. However, all those involved with 'Project Employ' have recognised the urgent need for courses of this nature, where education is seen as both a continuous and recurrent process.

219. The project focusses on the needs of this vulnerable group of 16–19 year olds, both in the light of the current debate on the provision of education for this age range and in the wider context of the present economic recession and the problem of long and short term unemployment.

220. Sponsorship was approved in September 1980 for a two year period.

Inner London Education Authority

ESL/Literacy for Second Language Speakers

221. The Inner London Education Authority makes substantial provision for both literacy and English as a second language tuition. However, there appears to be a growing number of students for whom ordinary literacy and ESL classes may not be appropriate.

222. A special development project sponsored by ALBSU, has been established to investigate and provide for the needs of students who are orally proficient in English as a second language but who now require more advanced literacy tuition. The work will be carried out in three distinct phases. During phase one, the two project co-ordinators, in close co-operation with literacy and ESL tutors will:

- * examine current provision of ESL/literacy and literacy classes
- * establish the basis on which students are placed in current provision

- * assess methods and materials which are used
- * identify students' and tutors' needs
- * identify good practice as a basis for additional provision

223. By the end of phase one, project tutors will be selected and briefed. Phase two will concentrate on establishing and co-ordinating experimental provision for ESL students needing advanced literacy tuition and pilot training programmes for the project tutors.

Building on the phase two experimental work, the co-ordinators, in the third phase will:

- * provide training courses for other ESL/literacy and literacy tutors in ILEA
- * pilot the materials developed by project tutors
- * produce and disseminate guidelines for practice and training
- * evaluate and report on the project.

During the last phase, the project tutors will assess the effectiveness locally of the experimental provision, making changes where necessary.

224. The sponsorship of this Project for a two year period was approved at the beginning of April 1981.

Leeds Education Authority

Radio Leeds Project

225. An ALBSU sponsored project in Leeds aims to prepare a series of educational programmes for local broadcast aimed primarily at unemployed adults who have difficulty coping with bureaucracy and problems associated with day to day living.

226. So far, eleven Starting Point programmes have been produced on topics of immediate concern to unemployed adults including:

- * interviews with DHSS staff on claims for benefit
- * discussions with students and tutors from the Boar Lane literacy shop
- * answering questions on the census form
- * dealing with fuel bills
- * interviews with a Department of Employment representative on issues relating to unemployment

227. Only a small part of these programmes concentrated on the actual teaching of basic skills as they are mainly concerned with enabling listeners to cope with the system. The information is presented in a lively and entertaining way, using interviews, drama, examples and lessons. The rationale for basing programmes on specific subjects is that it is felt that people tend to take more

notice of these than general 'learn to read and write' programmes. The specific programme has other advantages:

- * various techniques can be used to make the programmes more interesting
- * people are more likely to recognise their own problems in specific examples
- * general problems with literacy or numeracy may not be sufficiently immediate to prompt action — often a lack of basic skills is only meaningful in the context of a specific issue.

The audience is invited to 'phone in' at the end of the programme for further help or for referral and back up materials are available either for individual use at home or within groups.

228. It is difficult to assess the value of a radio programme, even if listeners phone in afterwards. Sixty-five calls were made after the eleven programmes, but this probably represents a small proportion of those who actually listen. As in network radio, estimations of audience size are made by multiplying each response by 50.

229. Trailing — short advertisements for the programme throughout the week — is one way of increasing response and is also an effective form of publicity. The time slot for the programme — 5.40 pm on Mondays — may not be the best time since many households are either watching television or eating their tea. A further problem is that potential clients are among those least likely to have a telephone or the spare cash to visit the project worker in the City centre.

230. Sponsorship was approved in July 1980 for a nine-month period, which began in January 1981.

Leeds Education Authority

Development of the 'Drop-In Centre'

231. Adult Literacy and Basic Education in Leeds provides a comprehensive service to meet the basic education needs of a wide range of adults — from ethnic minorities to the mentally handicapped. As part of this service, the Reading and Writing Drop-In Centre is well established, providing informal education and advice.

232. The special development project has been approved to develop a permanent professional basic skills unit open to those who have not previously benefitted from conventional education. Once new premises and additional staff are acquired, two new developments will take place.

*** An Education/Training Opportunities Shop**

This service will be linked with the local careers service which is currently being developed in Leeds. The shops will provide teaching in literacy and basic skills and other information and advice to those seeking work, retraining or further education opportunities.

*** Coffee/Lounge area**

A welcoming and non-threatening environment is a major aim of the centre. The main target group will be the young unemployed and others who would be encouraged to drop in during their lunch hour or on their way home from work.

233. The City's literacy co-ordinator and the project worker will be responsible for evaluating and advising on the work of the new centre and two project workers will organise and run the day to day activities.

234. Approval was given in July 1980 for a two year period of sponsorship. Due to difficulties over premises, the Project began in May 1981.

Liverpool Education Authority

Partnership Outreach Project

235. North-East Liverpool Technical College was established to serve the needs of industry, specialising in science and engineering. In recent years, it has become increasingly involved with the Liverpool Adult Basic Education Programme although existing provision is thought to merely scratch the surface of the needs of the 100,000 strong population. It is for this reason that a partnership outreach project has been established with sponsorship from ALBSU to develop basic education programmes based in communities in one of the city's outer areas.

236. The area concerned, like so many parts of Liverpool, has high levels of unemployment — more than 30% — and youth unemployment is estimated to be among the highest in Europe. The area also has a disproportionately high number of single parent families and a gross lack of community and social facilities. Although adult education does exist for people in this area, the way in which it is organised does not attract those who are diffident or even hostile to educational 'institutions'. Thus college staff who will work as part-time development workers/teachers under the project co-ordinator, will develop community based education according to local needs. Although the programmes will focus on the community as a whole, two groups have been identified as needing particular attention; women with small children and ex-offenders and three major programmes are to be developed — the Primary School partnership, the Community Groups partnership and the Prison and Probation Services partnership.

237. The 'Partnership Outreach Project' sees the future of adult education, especially in deprived areas, firmly rooted in the community. There is a vast wealth of experience and expertise which many adults have in fields other than basic literacy and numeracy. An essential factor of the 'partnership' will be to encourage adults to recognise the skills they do possess and to share those skills and experiences with others.

238. The sponsorship of this Project for a two year period was approved at the beginning of April 1981.

Northern Council for FE

Flexible Learning Opportunities in Basic Education

239. Despite the achievements of recent years, there are still many people who would benefit from basic education, but do not participate in existing provision. These may include:

- * potential students who are unable or unmotivated to take advantage of existing provision
- * shift workers, mothers with young children, fishermen, agricultural workers and others who are unable to attend on a regular basis
- * adults who have difficulty in maintaining a regular commitment to basic education.

240. The Northern Council for Further Education has nine constituent LEAs and substantial experience in the organisation and administration of training programmes for literacy and basic skills staff throughout the area. The region is concerned to increase provision by providing flexible learning opportunities which will encourage more adults to involve themselves in basic education.

241. One way of achieving this is to provide individualised learning patterns which students can follow at their own pace, without the requirement to attend classes on a regular basis. Counselling will be an important aspect of this provision — tutors will need to counsel and work with students to assess their needs clearly and accurately and to provide appropriate schemes of work.

242. To determine the feasibility of a flexible learning approach, the NCFE has established a special development project with ALBSU sponsorship which will develop three different models of flexible provision in three separate locations in the region. Each model will be monitored and evaluated so that good practice can be identified and applied throughout the region as a whole.

243. The three proposed models are:

- * A new centre established in Consett Technical College utilising existing College resources to extend the range of learning opportunities in literacy and basic studies. The community surrounding the college has particular problems associated with rural isolation and high unemployment. Alternative learning systems will be provided for those who do not normally come into contact with the College, including those in the outlying rural communities and the long term unemployed.
- * An existing 'drop-in' centre in Blyth, Northumberland where distance learning opportunities will be developed — tuition which takes place outside the normal venues for education e.g. at home or at work. This will particularly focus on the needs of the local community, shift and coastal sea going workers and others who are unable to attend a centre on a regular basis.
- * The third model is based in an urban centre in Newcastle. It will aim, once more, to provide a comprehensive and flexible service for people working irregular shifts or with heavy family responsibilities. Students will be able to study at their own pace on their own, but have access to trained tutors, as well as a telephone link to study advice.

All three models share the common objective of the project — extending learning opportunities beyond existing provision — but each is deliberately designed to give three different contexts from which to approach the same common objective.

244. Approval was given in February 1981 for a two year period of sponsorship to the end of March 1983.

National Union of Public Employees

Language and Literacy Courses for Manual Workers

245. Organised by the National Union of Public Employees and sponsored by ALBSU, the project offers courses aimed at improving language, reading and writing skills in work time for manual workers employed by the University of London.

246. Agreement was reached with the University's management for two hour weekly release for those employees wanting to enrol on the courses. Three month language courses and six month literacy courses were planned and a tutor was appointed to run each course. The initial recruitment drive was made through leaflets distributed throughout the University Halls of Residence, and NUPE branch secretaries. The response was limited and more success in recruitment has been achieved by using a direct, personal approach.

247. Students attending the language courses clearly also had a need to improve literacy skills and two distinct areas of need emerged — those needing basic language and reading skills and those needing to extend their language and reading ability. Special materials — flashcards, worksheets and games — were devised to meet students' interests and abilities and more advanced materials were written by the tutor, or selected from newspapers. The tutor maintained regular contact with management supervisors, who reported that employees were satisfied with the courses.

248. Despite the limitations of short, three month courses, providing only 28 hours tuition in total, both tutors and students were pleased with the progress made. The fact that students gained sufficient confidence and motivation to continue with their studies in their own time, emphasises the value of the courses.

249. The programme for the literacy courses was closely related to work with the Union — particularly health and safety. Two of the students, at the end of one course, produced a draft for a NUPE recruitment leaflet. Many felt the need for a longer period of tuition and were referred, on completion of the course, to local literacy schemes.

250. Although the courses have met with a number of problems — over recruitment, securing day release for some students and confusions over the differing aims of the separate language and literacy courses — some positive pointers for the future have emerged.

- * recruitment by direct contact with management used initially for potential language students, also proved effective in identifying literacy students

- * classes in or near the workplace are clearly popular — a factor which should be borne in mind for further courses
- * interest in the courses has greatly increased since the outset, and more employing bodies are requesting places for their employees.

251. The Project was approved in June 1980 for an eighteen-month period of sponsorship to the end of December 1981.

Parents Centre, Newham

Basic Skills Programme for the Unemployed

252. Newham Education Concern Services, a charity concerned with lack of educational opportunity, take-up of further education and general literacy levels in schools, was instrumental in the establishment of the Newham Parents' Centre in 1975. In October 1980, with ALBSU funding, a new project was launched at the Centre — Basic Skills for the Unemployed.

253. The project's main aims are:

- * to devise strategies for identifying unemployed people, not participating in government schemes, who require help with basic skills
- * to offer relevant education activities to those people
- * to select and train a volunteer group of local people prepared to offer educational tutoring and counselling to the unemployed
- * to develop working relationships between local volunteers and the professional services of the careers office and the employment services division
- * to extend the careers literature resources room at the Newham Parents Centre
- * to publicise in the community opportunities for improving basic skills in Further and Adult Education
- * to encourage social contact among the unemployed to overcome isolation.

254. Following a pilot Threshold course in Autumn 1980, a leaflet was prepared with the help and advice of students. 'We Have Lift Off' and its matching display poster outline the range of inter-related services by the Basic Skills Programme. The Centre's leaflet 'Claiming Benefit — On leaving school without a job' reminds the unemployed that further study is possible without forfeiting benefit and may encourage more youngsters to take part in the programme. Currently, the services are directed towards the young unemployed, mainly because it is building on existing work in the Centre's 'Outreach' programme. However, it is hoped that the work will be extended to those over 25 who form 60% of the local unemployed population.

255. Many of the students have been referred by officers from the Newham Careers Service, though some are self-referred, prompted to ask for help with basic skills from their involvement with the Centre.

256. The proposed volunteer support team has three inter-dependent functions:

- * course tutoring
- * general employment counselling and
- * personal profiles of specific jobs

In September 1980, the programme began pilot Threshold courses, followed by two five-week courses. The 21 students now attending falls short of the anticipated 35, but this is mainly due to difficulties over publicity for the starting dates. The project workers have also been active in the formation of the Newham Employment Consortium to improve employment and training opportunities in the area.

257. The project maintains a comprehensive list of titles from the MSC Careers and Occupational Information Centre, with the full range of COIC leaflets and booklets available on loan and has mounted careers displays at parents' evenings. A numeracy booklet is to be published in Autumn 1981 and the project workers will also be involved with the production of a Basic Skills Learning file with the Centre's Outreach team.

258. The Basic Skills programme is also changing, but gradually. Initial plans have been adapted in the light of the Centre's earlier experience and feedback from users. Strategies to deal with unemployment cannot be developed overnight, but the project hopes that by its second year, it will have made significant progress towards meeting the basic skills needs of unemployed people in Newham.

259. Sponsorship for a two year period was approved in June 1980.

Peckham Bookplace

'Drop-In Numeracy' Service

260. In January 1981 a Drop-In Numeracy service was established at the Bookplace, in Peckham, sponsored by ALBSU, and run by one full time worker and one part-time worker. The Drop-In service is available for the whole of each Tuesday. It aims to provide help with immediate problems involving numeracy, such as gas bills, social security, shopping etc. advice about courses and sessions for those who may require intensive short term help, plus a regular programme for anyone seeking a course in basic numeracy. Other areas covered would include research into numeracy needs in everyday life. The development of learning materials and liaison with other organisations providing help with numeracy would also be considered.

261. The first three weeks of the project were spent:

- * planning the timetable
- * organising resources
- * discussing with other Bookplace staff how best to deal with enquiries

- * visiting similar projects to learn from their experience including Hammersmith Walk-In Numeracy, Bethnal Green Adult Education Institute and the Further and Higher Education Curriculum Development Unit at Westminster College
- * developing contacts with the staff at the local Job Centre, Advice Centre, Health Centre and Southwark Institute
- * producing leaflets and posters and distributing them in the local area.

262. The publicity for the Drop-In service encourages people to make enquiries at any time, either by telephone or in person and these enquiries are dealt with by the full time worker or trained Bookplace staff. The full time worker follows up enquiries, co-ordinates information and records, publicises the service and prepares materials with the help of the part time worker.

263. The project provides for a variety of numeracy needs. In a recent sample of adults attending the one day session, four or five were doing division, fractions and decimals for a job or training, one was doing more advanced work — algebra, one or two were doing basic number work to help them cope better with everyday problems and one or two were doing practical work on measuring and weighing. At the moment, most students work individually, either with tutors or on their own, but the project workers foresee the development of group work.

264. The project team also hope to develop the use of mathematical games to build confidence among students and are running special sessions on decimals, electricity bills, VAT and benefits.

265. The Project was approved in October 1980 for a two year period of sponsorship.

Salford Education Authority

Work related basic skills courses for the unemployed

266. A special development project in Salford, sponsored by ALBSU, is providing facilities for adults to improve their work related basic skills and to date 38 students have taken part, 14 of whom have transferred to more advanced courses and two have taken up full time employment.

267. The course is organised on two levels:

Level A is intended to increase self confidence and raise self image by:

- * developing comprehension and word recognition
- * awakening an interest in reading for information and enjoyment
- * improving listening skills
- * improving speech and communication
- * improving numeracy to enable students to cope with shopping, budgeting, hire purchase, household bills, checking wages etc.

Level B is intended for those who have already experienced some basic adult education, particularly adults who have completed a Preparatory TOPS course and includes:

- * revision of grammar, punctuation, sentence structure and use of dictionary
- * interview techniques, discussion of current affairs and appreciation of literature
- * creative writing, comprehension and letter writing
- * revision and re-inforcement of basic mathematical principles
- * fractions, percentages, decimals, area, volume, ratio and proportion
- * appreciation of the fact that mathematics is a continuously expanding system of organised thought, employed in most aspects of human activity

Students are encouraged to work as individuals, measuring their progress against their own achievements rather than those of others in the group.

268. The course tutors are experienced in working with low achievers, encouraging students to develop self confidence through the realisation that everyone has some ability which can be developed. The tutors discuss progress and problems regularly and are often asked for advice on particular problems by individual students. The students are supportive of each other and of the group as a whole.

269. An indication of the success of the group can be seen in the increasing numbers of students applying to join the course. In January 1981, enrolment had to cease for three weeks as maximum numbers had been reached. Potential students are referred by Job Centres, though many now are coming forward having heard about the course 'by word of mouth'.

270. Approval was given in July 1980 for a two year period of sponsorship, which began in September 1980.

Sheffield Education Authority

Adult Basic Education in the Inner City

271. Inner city areas frequently share common characteristics – housing and environmental problems, a high percentage of large and single parent families, elderly and disabled and immigrant groups and a high incidence of unemployment.

272. This venture is concerned with two adult education divisions where both local authority and voluntary workers attempt to provide an integrated and flexible service responding to the needs of inner city neighbourhoods. Existing teams of workers in various areas are to be used as a springboard for six basic education projects run by Sheffield's Adult Education services and sponsored by ALBSU.

273. Experience has shown that people on large housing estates do not often respond to the usual 'marketing' approach of basic education. However, the potential for contacts via community workers is enormous — a person needing advice, for example, on housing repairs may also need some other form of basic education.

274. The six projects — to be run by two full time project workers — share the common aim of developing effective basic education provision for potential students in inner city areas who are not reached by current provision. The workers will develop programmes from contacts already made by community workers — based either in existing centres of activity or mobile teaching centres.

275. Parent Education Initiative

The South Sheffield parent education worker has developed strategies, including toy libraries and a play van, to enhance adults' role as parents. In the process of discovering how children learn, adults often develop the enthusiasm to deal with their own learning difficulties. The project will develop contacts with parents to provide basic education at a parents' centre, a community centre and through existing activities organised by the parent education worker.

276. Employment Related Skills with Co-operatives and Workshops

A community workshop for young unemployed people provides a range of activities from woodwork to catering. Although the workshop is not fully utilised at present, it is attracting increasing numbers of people wanting to learn new work related skills. A group of young Rastafarians are in the process of developing a third world bookshop co-operative. A basic education programme will be developed dealing with a wide range of skills from book-keeping to language and communication skills. A small group of disabled people are trying to establish a basic office skills, printing and reprographic co-operative. Although many already possess a range of skills, they have identified areas in which they would need both occasional and regular educational support.

277. Numeracy in the Workplace

A numeracy project is to be established in three to six local industries alongside mobile citizens' advice sessions and an adult education industrial history project. The project workers will develop strategies for numeracy tuition through contact with management and unions in the local firms.

278. Basic Education on Council Estates

In many of the City's council house developments, there is no established base for literacy, numeracy and basic education provision. The project will explore a number of strategies to develop provision for the often isolated tenants in some of these areas — working with residents and tenants' groups. Operating from a community base — an empty flat, room or mobile teaching centre — the project will examine basic education needs of local people.

279. Information/Advice and Drop-In Network

Several community information and advice drop-in centres exist throughout the project area and local groups are keen for these centres to become bases for adult education work. Tuition in literacy and basic skills could be developed in a variety of ways and the project workers will explore the potential for this with staff and users of four information and advice centres.

280. Numeracy Drop-In Centre

A limited amount of basic education — English as a second language, numeracy and literacy tuition — is provided at a community education centre in the project area, where an unemployed self help group — SHUSH — has recently been established. The group organises referrals of people with casual skills to small jobs in the area which need to be carried out for individuals or community groups. The project workers will provide for basic education needs arising from the SHUSH group. The community education centre will also act as a resource for materials and equipment and provide a general numeracy drop-in service for the local community.

281. The range and geographical spread of the six projects will need support and careful monitoring and a group has been established for this purpose — including representatives from adult education and community work teams.

282. Sponsorship was approved in January 1981 for a two year period commencing in April 1981.

Sheffield Gypsy Support Group

Drop-In Literacy Centre

283. The Sheffield Gypsy Support Group's project aims to establish a drop-in centre, providing literacy materials and tuition for Sheffield's Traveller population.

284. The main priority for the project worker initially was to find suitable accommodation for the Drop-In Centre. In a decaying inner city area, frequented by Travellers, a number of shop premises had been compulsorily purchased by Sheffield City Council and some of these premises were available on short term lease. Four premises were identified and though none were ideal in every way, one emerged as the best choice — it was self contained, clean, sound and could be put into use very soon after the lease had been obtained.

285. The project worker set about drawing up plans, applying for planning permission and getting Building Regulation approval for use of the premises as a Drop-In Literacy centre. After a number of setbacks which left the project worker 'wondering whether we are suffering from the results of a pervasive prejudice against Travellers or the effects of a paralysing bureaucracy', the premises were approved for use by the project. While awaiting confirmation of the premises, the worker continued to visit families and to make contact with new families moving into the area. This 'outreach' work, the training of volunteers, visits to other literacy centres and the production of materials during the initial development stage are essential for the future success of the project.

286. The drop-in centre finally opened at the end of June. Initial enquiries tended to be from travellers seeking welfare rights advice. But within 2/3 weeks, many enquiries for literacy help had been received and a few students began to attend regularly for lessons. Each week in August saw 100% increase on the previous week's figures for enquiries and lessons, both from gypsies and members of other ethnic minorities.

287. The Project was approved in October 1980 for a two year period of sponsorship which began in February 1981.

Tower Hamlets Training Forum

Clothing Skills Training Workshop Development Project

288. The Tower Hamlets Training Forum was developed in response to growing concern over lack of training opportunities for local people and is supported by 20 affiliated bodies, such as the London Chamber of Commerce, Tower Hamlets Trades Council, local adult and further education institutes and local workshops. One area of major concern has been the lack of training opportunities for garment workers. The clothing industry, with its characteristic small, family based workshops, has attracted a high proportion of immigrants — mainly from Bangladesh — many of whom have had little benefit of formal education or training schemes by statutory agencies in this country.

289. A Clothing Skills Training Workshop was established to enable individuals to

- * understand the process of manufacturing in its entirety
- * learn specific vocational skills needed in manufacture
- * learn language and literacy skills related to their work needs
- * learn skills common to the clothing industry and other industries in an attempt to open up opportunities outside the garment trade

Training at the Workshop began in August 1980 and included literacy and language tuition related to sewing, machining and pattern cutting courses and pressing and pattern grading classes. The language element is given high priority to enable trainees to find work both in and outside the clothing industry. Consequently, mother tongue and English as a second language teachers have been employed to provide daytime, evening and weekend tuition.

290. With sponsorship from ALBSU, the Workshop is now able to develop further its work in language and literacy linked to manufacturing skills training

The aims of the ALBSU project are threefold:

- * to survey the language and literacy needs of garment workers
- * to develop techniques of integrating language and literacy skills tuition with work skills tuition — both in the mother tongue and English

- * to develop curriculum and learning materials appropriate to the needs of garment workers

291. The project workers will establish the language needs of garment workers in different industrial situations by interviewing employers and workers. They will also visit local employers and training providers to assess the language and literacy requirements needed for further employment and training opportunities. They will also use a variety of techniques to link their work with that of the work skills tutors — asking students to describe work processes, focussing on unfamiliar concepts such as measuring and shape and encouraging social contact between teachers and students.

292. Audio and visual curriculum materials will be developed which will be topic based and geared to introduce a variety of language and literacy functions. Bi-lingual literacy materials will also be produced with a view to establishing the role of mother tongue in relation to the teaching of language and literacy.

293. The project sponsored for two years, will hopefully be adapted for use by other training agencies concerned with garment workers. The long term objective is to publicise the project's findings on curriculum development and techniques for link-skills teaching. These may prove to be relevant to other groups of workers, both regionally and nationally, who are debarred from training and employment opportunities because of language and literacy difficulties.

294. Sponsorship was approved in January 1981 for a two year period up to January 1983.

Walk-In Numeracy Project

Mathshop Project

295. The Walk-In Numeracy Project in Hammersmith applied to ALBSU and the Hammersmith Inner Area Programme for funds to establish a mathshop. Based in premises in the centre of Hammersmith, the mathshop will offer help and advice on numeracy problems related to everyday life, work, job-search and training.

296. The shop, run in conjunction with the current Walk-In Numeracy Project and involving two extra full-time workers, will be open five days a week, including Saturdays for 48 weeks in the year. The mathshop will provide information on numeracy provision in the area, referring students to other schemes where appropriate, and the mathematics required for specific jobs and training. The mathshop workers hope to contribute to this knowledge by asking ex-students to provide information on the maths they use in their jobs. By comparing this with information from other sources and making it available to current students, it is hoped that more informed choices can be made about possible jobs.

297. The sponsorship of this Project for a two year period was approved at the beginning of April 1981.

Welsh Referral Service

The DOLEN Project

298. DOLEN is the referral and information service for literacy and basic skills in Wales sponsored by ALBSU, and aims to widen the literacy referral service as well as to stimulate further referrals. Its function is not simply to collect information, carry out surveys and write reports, but also to provide a central link between adults seeking tuition and providers of the service. DOLEN now operates at a general level through the media and liaison with other agencies and at a local level, through pilot projects aimed at specific groups.

299. The first task was to publicise DOLEN and to make the telephone number known to as many people as possible. Stationery was printed, handbills and posters prepared and distributed and contacts were made with the media. HTV agreed to prepare and use a filler to advertise DOLEN and local radio stations co-operated in a week long intensive publicity campaign in Cardiff. Cardiff CBC Action Desk team, together with the local literacy organiser and tutors were a tremendous help in the campaign. Eighteen people responded during the week and more importantly, many of these enquiries were from people who were aware for the first time that help was available for their literacy and numeracy problems. A Radio Wales Chat Show interview in October 1980 brought a range of enquiries to DOLEN — from literacy to home economics and computer maths. DOLEN's project officer, assistant and team of volunteers continue to make contacts with the media and adult educators. As they themselves are aware 'not all of these meetings will lead directly to support of referral activities, but as so many of the people... knew little or nothing about DOLEN we have made good progress towards further co-operation'.

300. The project team are keeping careful records of all referrals for literacy, numeracy and English as a second language tuition, both for potential students and tutors. Checks are also made on the sources of referrals — radio, T.V. posters and handbills. Records show that referrals for 1980 were slightly less than for 1979, but this reflects the lack of publicity in 1980 — publicity always results in an increase in the number of referrals.

301. A first pilot project — aimed at young unemployed people in the Caerphilly area — was launched in November 1980. Discussions were held with various agencies, Careers Office, Job Centre, Community Industry, Further Education, Youth Officer, Social Services, Probation Office, educational psychologists and the Manpower Services Commission. After consultation with the Caerphilly literacy co-ordinator, a list of class times and venues was produced to be used on the handbills as publicity for the project. Over 700 handbills were circulated, but the initial response was low, only 13 enquiries. However, despite this disappointing start, there have been some encouraging developments. Caerphilly Social Services have been considering the possibility of a drop-in advice centre on one of the town's housing estates. Prompted by DOLEN's Young Unemployed Project the Social Services hope that basic skills volunteer tutors can work in conjunction with the advice centre. The idea is to introduce the young people who will be running their own coffee bar at the centre to a basic skills scheme. Another 'spinoff' of the

pilot project has been to encourage local voluntary probation workers to set up literacy and basic skills classes in the probation offices for those clients who are not willing to attend LEA schemes. It is encouraging that this idea has spread to other voluntary probation groups — in Pontypridd, Newport, Swansea, Bridgend and Cardigan. DOLEN has been asked to advise on the setting up of these groups.

302. DOLEN's activities also include compiling a register of existing literacy and basic skills courses and providing information on books and materials.

303. The Project was approved in July 1980 for a two year period of sponsorship.

Grant Aid

304. As well as sponsoring some twenty-seven Special Development Projects in 1980/81, ALBSU also grant-aided three national voluntary organisations under Section 3(e) of the Unit's Memorandum of Arrangements: 'Write First Time', a national newspaper largely written by literacy students received grant aid to continue the production of the newspaper as well as to enable the appointment of a national writing development worker.

305. The Unit also provided limited grant-aid for the Adult Literacy Support Services Fund, the national referral unit, as a contribution to the cost of continuing the service in England.

306. Finally, the Unit grant-aided the National Federation of Voluntary Literacy Schemes — the national body linking a number of voluntary literacy schemes — to enable the Federation to continue a full-time secretariat based in London.

PART III: THE FUTURE

307. Whilst it is encouraging to report that the majority of LEAs have continued to maintain provision of adult literacy, numeracy and other basic skills work with adults at current levels, ALBSU recognises that considerable disparity of provision exists from area to area. Thus a potential student can either find a well-publicised well-resourced service able to offer a variety of sensitive learning opportunities or struggle against what appear to be insuperable barriers only to end up on a seemingly endless waiting list or in poorly resourced and badly co-ordinated tuition. This disparity of provision has been noticeable in adult literacy since the beginning of the campaign in the mid-seventies and extends to most other areas of work included in the Unit's remit. Moreover, recent cuts in provision have, in our view, increased the disparity between different areas of England and Wales.

308. The Unit is aware of the discussions taking place concerning those parts of the 1944 Education Act which are central to the provision of adult and further education in England and Wales and of the report of the Further Education Legal Basis Group. We believe that these discussions are crucial to the future of adult and further education as a whole including provision of literacy, numeracy and related basic skills. Furthermore, we recognise that provision of basic educational opportunities for those adults least advantaged in our society is an important part of a comprehensive adult and further education service and that the future provision of basic skills tuition needs to continue to be seen as part of the future provision of adult and further education as a whole.

309. Concern about the disparity of provision from area to area has been expressed by all the central agencies since 1975 and is fundamental to the issues discussed by the Further Education Legal Basis Group, for despite the importance that central government undoubtedly attaches to this area of work, no minimum standards of provision exist concerning fees, co-ordination, staff/student ratios, size of classes, length of terms etc. Furthermore, even the modest recommendations of the Adult Literacy Resource Agency's 'Some Notes on Good Practice' issued in 1978 have not been implemented in many LEA areas. ALBSU's concern for the quality of local provision and the need for adequate minimum standards for adult literacy and related basic skills work with adults has led to an indepth consideration of good practice by the Unit's Consultative Committee which will result in some further guidance for providing bodies and we are hopeful that this may lead to a decrease in the disparity of provision. However, that said, all our experience leads us to believe that a sound legal basis is needed for the provision of basic skills work with adults throughout England and Wales. **The Unit recommends, therefore, that central government consider amending the 1944 Education Act in order that provision for adult and further education, including basic skills is made an unequivocal duty of each local education authority in England and Wales.**

310. In its report to the Secretaries of State for 1978/79 our predecessor the Adult Literacy Unit said:

'Adult literacy work is seriously under-resourced in most LEA areas. That the position has not worsened significantly since last year only reinforces the view that this lack of resources has been noticeable since the early days of the campaign.'

311. Allowing for the increased resources allocated for work with the young unemployed, this under-resourcing affects almost every other area of work included in the Unit's remit and hampers considerably the establishment of a comprehensive service as well as the development of provision in general. Moreover, in some areas this under resourcing has grown even more acute due to recent expenditure cuts and the service which does exist relies almost entirely on the commitment of a few paid staff and numerous volunteers. Often the lack of resources to match this commitment means that paid staff have to work an excessive number of unpaid hours in order to maintain the most basic provision. The reintroduction of lengthy waiting lists in some areas, even where publicity is minimal, is just one aspect of this under resourcing that particularly concerns the Unit.

312. That the base of adult literacy and basic skills work continues to be fragile is particularly worrying when changes in society are making new demands on the service that does exist. The rise in unemployment of recent years has undoubtedly seriously affected adults who lack basic skills and will continue to do so in the future. The Manpower Services Commission's 'New Training Initiative' indicates that:

'Those jobs that require limited skills have been disappearing rapidly: 600,000 were lost between 1971 and 1978, and even more will disappear in the next five years. Blue collar jobs are fewer; white collar jobs will outnumber them by 1985'.

The Document goes on to say that:

'People with little skill to offer — and there are many — have less and less chance of getting and retaining a job.'

313. These changes in employment patterns are likely to affect basic skills provision particularly. Already adult literacy schemes are playing their part in providing advice and assistance with the educational components of the Youth Opportunities Programme, where this is appropriate and within the limitations imposed by the resources available, and this area of work is likely to continue to develop in the future. Equally demanding are the needs of older unskilled workers whose lack of basic communication and numerical skills are exposed when they are made redundant and have to seek new employment. The Unit is particularly concerned with the effects of unemployment amongst the unskilled and unqualified in our society and this concern grows ever more immediate as vacancies grow fewer for workers who often need considerable help with basic skills before they are able to obtain a job or training.

314. Our experience in the last year would lead us to believe that a significant and increasing percentage of students receiving help with literacy and basic skills are unemployed and this number is only limited by the lack of adequate full and part-time day provision in England and Wales. The accepted estimate of the number of 'functionally illiterate' adults in England and Wales is two

million which represents 6% of the adult population. Yet if only 6% of the registered unemployed lack adequate literacy skills (a fairly conservative estimate at a time when unskilled jobs are disappearing rapidly) some 180,000 adults need to be provided with opportunities to improve their basic skills. If, however, the unemployed contains a rather higher percentage of adults in need of help, this estimate could be considerably higher. In addition there are those who are fortunate enough to be in employment and who need help in literacy and basic skills. Present provision is, in our view, barely touching the tip of the iceberg.

315. The Unit would not wish to emphasise unduly economic arguments for increasing the resources available for adult literacy and basic skills work with adults. The health and prosperity of individuals and of society as a whole does not depend solely on work, however important that may be. The education of our children, the pursuit of leisure interests, involvement in the local community and in the democratic process are all important components of the individual's and society's development and must not be overlooked. Moreover, with increasing technological changes and the increase in leisure time and opportunities this will bring, a new demand for education and knowledge in the widest sense is likely to develop. Without literacy and other basic skills, a significant percentage of the population will be unable to take part in this process of change in a meaningful way and will be in danger of becoming part of an increasingly disadvantaged section of society. All this leads us to believe that **central government should encourage LEAs throughout England and Wales to attach high priority to the provision of adult literacy and basic skills tuition for all those who wish to avail themselves of it.** The Unit recognises that an increase in the resources available cannot be achieved by central government alone although central government can give a lead to providing bodies with a view to the establishment of an adequately resourced service in every area.

316. One of the clear demonstrations of central government's commitment to adult literacy and basic skills work has been its continued support of a central resource and development unit since 1975 and we believe that it is important to maintain and develop this dimension in the immediate future. The Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit has developed since 1980 the work of earlier units by co-ordinating provision, offering advice and guidance to providing bodies, initiating and sponsoring a significant amount of in-service training in every region, producing and publishing materials and other resources, sponsoring new developments and encouraging the exchanges of experience and ideas. We believe that this has been an effective and cost effective method of developing the quality of provision and is an essential component of the continuous development of the service in England and Wales. **The work of ALBSU in its first year of operation has established a sound basis for development in the future and we would recommend that this work needs to be continued and expanded after March 1983.**

317. Experience in the last year has illustrated both the very real connection between literacy and numeracy as well as the need to explore necessary differences in approach between them, and the Unit has begun this process not least through its sponsorship of in-service training and of innovatory experi-

mental projects. However, the interpretation of that part of the Unit's remit concerned with 'those related communication and coping skills without which people are impeded from applying or being considered for employment' has presented some problems in practice. For example, almost one sixth of the submissions to ALBSU for sponsorship of Special Development Projects have had to be rejected because they fell outside the remit, although this does not mean that they were less relevant or worthy of support. The Unit acknowledges that employment is one of the major motivations for those seeking to improve their basic skills, although in a time of high unemployment and limited job vacancies, employment is by no means the only motivation. Increasingly, it is recognised that whilst it is important to have a trained and educated workforce able to adapt to the changes that are taking place in employment — changes which are likely to continue to the end of the century — for some people continuous employment is a fairly distant prospect at present. The distinction between those who see this acquisition of skills as an early entry to employment and those who are compelled to assume a much longer time scale for the prospect of re-employment becomes increasingly artificial. Thus, education at a basic level needs to involve a variety of purposes including increased employability, a more fulfilled individual and a better educated society. **Therefore, we believe that the Unit's remit needs to be expanded to include not only those related communication and coping skills which lead directly to increased employability but other associated basic skills which benefit the individual and society as a whole with perhaps only partial relevance to early employment.** In recommending this development, we recognise that it may be desirable for the Unit to concentrate on specific parts of this expanded remit at certain times subject to the agreement of the Education Departments.

318. The position of ALBSU in relation to English as a Second Language work has led to particular confusion in the first year of operation. For example, although the Unit is involved in communication at a basic level for adults, ALBSU's remit precludes first level ESL provision and only allows involvement at the 'post-basic' level. This has, in our view, created an artificial distinction which does not relate to the needs as they arise in the field. Moreover, as basic communication skills for ethnic groups is bound to involve ESL work, ALBSU's remit should not preclude work in this area. **With this in mind, we would urge that in reconsidering the Unit's remit, account be taken of English as a Second Language work in appropriate form and that the role of ALBSU in relation to this area of work be reconsidered.**

319. Adult literacy and basic skills work is concerned, in the main, with those adults who have benefitted least from the education system, usually the unqualified and unskilled. The effects of the changes in society in the next decade, including advances in technology, will be particularly felt by the under educated and disadvantaged adult. In all aspects of our lives the ability to read, calculate and communicate effectively will become increasingly important and the opportunities to improve these skills at any time during an adult's life will be crucial. Thus provision needs to be seen as a continuing need rather than a short term 'mopping up' operation and this continuing need must be recognised by central and local government. It is not to decry the work of schools that we urge continuing provision, but rather a recognition of

experience in this country and abroad that a compulsory school system cannot provide everyone with adequate levels of literacy in a society undergoing rapid changes. The mark in place of a signature that indicated illiteracy a hundred years ago has been replaced by the notion of 'functional illiteracy' which takes account of the demands made upon the individual in a highly sophisticated age. Moreover, it could be said that the 'functionally illiterate' adult of today is even more disadvantaged than the classically illiterate of a century ago.

320. We believe that continued provision needs a longer term central focus rather than a series of short term units which has represented central government's strategy to date. By their nature, short term units can only consider short term initiatives and developments rather than the necessary medium and longer term needs of the service. Moreover, the uncertainty created by the succession of different short life central units since 1975 has hampered the development of adult literacy in England and Wales as well as affecting the morale of those working in the field at all levels. Programmes of regional training have been continuously affected by the opening and closing of central units, a longer term publications policy has not been able to be developed and sponsorship of new initiatives has had to be seriously limited as the period of life of a Unit decreases. It is not in our view possible to develop a high quality adult literacy and basic skills service and integrate it into adult and continuing education provision in a period of three years and this is particularly so at a time when many of the developments taking place are still tentative. **We would not necessarily argue for an indefinite period of operation for the Unit but we do believe that continuation of ALBSU after 1983 should be for a realistic period, say ten years, subject to reviews, and we would urge the Education Departments to make funds available for this purpose.**

321. Alongside the development of the Unit's remit referred to above, we recognise a need to expand and develop to a limited extent the functions of the Unit. At present ALBSU is involved in:

- a. the employment of full-time and part-time staff to offer an advisory service to local education authorities ('LEAs') and others;
- b. the preparation or commissioning and publication of relevant teaching materials and other documents;
- c. the co-ordination and, where appropriate, the direct provision of relevant training where such provision is additional to that planned by LEAs;
- d. the undertaking, by means of the direct employment and assignment of staff or otherwise, of development projects in collaboration with LEAs and other relevant statutory or voluntary bodies, subject to the provision being additional to that planned by the relevant LEA or LEAs and to that LEA or those LEAs agreeing, where relevant, to assume full responsibility for the provision or its continuation in appropriate form after funding by ALBSU ceases: and
- e. such other provision, subject to the approval of the Education Departments, as ALBSU considers desirable.

and whilst we feel that this should continue to form the core of the Unit's work, it is desirable to extend these functions to a limited extent.

322. Whilst recognising the disparity of provision in England and Wales and the lack of growth in adult literacy and basic skills provision in many areas, we would not wish to overlook the difficulties facing LEAs and voluntary organisations in a period of severe economic restraint. This lack of growth most seriously affects those parts of educational provision that are not adequately protected by legislation. Moreover, a relatively small, fragile, recently developed service is often affected by even marginal cutbacks out of all proportion to the savings in expenditure made by the reduction. Although the current period of restraint and nil growth may be limited, we are concerned that adult literacy and basic skills provision in some areas will have become so eroded by the time resources are available, that the framework of provision established since 1975 will not be able to be developed further. The Unit's resourcing role to date has been largely through the sponsorship of supplementary regional training and a limited number of innovatory special development projects, and as valuable as we believe these have been, they are not intended to assist to a significant extent in the maintenance and development of basic provisions. **Thus the Unit would wish to see its functions extended to allow ALBSU to assist LEAs and voluntary bodies directly for limited periods, perhaps through a system of development grants.**

323. We do not envisage such assistance across the board, nor would we wish it to substitute for the LEAs' responsibility to finance the service, but rather we would wish to concentrate on specific developments, such as numeracy provision or work with the adult unemployed linked to the advisory service provided by the Unit. This will be particularly important during a period of chronically severe financial adjustment by public bodies.

324. The Unit has also been particularly concerned at the deteriorating position of voluntary organisations who are attempting to make provision for adult literacy and associated basic skills. At a time of cutbacks in adult education provision and standstill budgets, the major source of financial support, the LEAs, are often unable to support the core work of voluntary organisations at an adequate level. Furthermore, although voluntary bodies can look to ALBSU for sponsorship of innovatory work, except in a very marginal sense this does not help support the basic provision and may encourage an innovatory attitude that cannot be sustained in the long term. Thus, the position of voluntary bodies has considerably worsened since 1976/77, a number of voluntary bodies having ceased making provision altogether and few new voluntary agencies becoming involved. All this at a time when the total resources available need to be utilised and when the flexibility and ability to respond quickly to new demands, the hallmark of many voluntary organisations, is becoming ever more necessary. In 1978 our predecessor, the Adult Literacy Unit, voiced its concern about the future of voluntary organisations and recommended that:

'whilst the Unit recognises the essential role of LEAs in relation to local voluntary organisations and would not wish to see the funding of voluntary bodies passed entirely to central government, serious consideration of a more secure funding arrangement needs to be given as a matter of priority'.

and ALBSU would reiterate and support that view. We are disturbed that action has not been taken to establish a more secure funding arrangement and

consequently the position of voluntary bodies has continued to worsen. **In the period post 1983 the Unit would hope that its functions would be expanded to allow for some direct support of the work within ALBSU's remit undertaken by voluntary organisations.**

325. The development of adult literacy provision since 1975 has been a remarkable achievement. In a little over five years, the number of students receiving help has increased fourteen fold, the total who have now come forward for help has reached over 200,000, the quality of the service has improved consistently since the early days and every LEA has established a basic framework of provision. Even more remarkable is that this development has taken place at a time of economic restraint and has therefore been due largely to the commitment and unstinting work of a small number of full and part-time staff supported by the thousands of volunteers who give of their free time to help another adult. Moreover, all the assessments that have taken place indicate that adult literacy is highly successful in helping adults improve their reading and writing. The major research into progress sponsored by the Department of Education and Science and carried out by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) has recently been published and bears out this conclusion.

'...the evidence from the test results indicate that just over 25% of the learners participating in the study made what would be considered to be rapid progress. A further 50% of the learners made reasonable progress. Approximately 25% made no gains that could be measured by the tests employed.'

All this with a group of adults who have been judged — and often judge themselves — to be failures as far as learning is concerned.

326. Since 1980 the base of adult literacy has started to be built upon both nationally and locally. Help with other basic skills, such as numeracy, is now being offered and new target audiences are beginning to be reached. Provision locally, regionally and nationally is beginning to be better co-ordinated. However, although a beginning has been made, a considerable amount of development is needed before a comprehensive literacy and basic skills service, as part of adult further and continuing education, is securely established in each area and a central focus such as ALBSU has a crucial part to play in this development. In a rapidly changing and developing society, the mastery of basic communication skills is essential for every adult if they are to be able to play a full part in the developments that are taking place. To deny those least advantaged in our society the opportunity to master these skills is to deprive a significant and important minority of the population access to education and increase, in many cases, their alienation from society. The establishment of a comprehensive literacy and basic skills service in each locality is an urgent priority if all those who wish to improve their basic communication and coping skills are to be given the opportunity to do so.

APPENDIX I—MEMORANDUM OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE ADULT LITERACY AND BASIC SKILLS UNIT

1. This memorandum sets out the arrangements under which the National Institute of Adult Education ('NIAE') agrees to establish, as a special organisation within itself, the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit ('ALBSU') with functions as set out below initially for the financial years 1980/81, 1981/82 and 1982/83, during which time ALBSU will, subject to the approval of Parliament, be grant aided by the Department of Education and Science ('DES') and the Education Department of the Welsh Office ('WOED') hereinafter referred to as the Education Departments.

Functions of the Unit

2. ALBSU will administer the grant made by the Education Departments together with such other monies as it may be granted, for developing within the general education service in England and Wales provision designed to improve the standards of proficiency for adults, whose first or second language is English, in the areas of literacy and numeracy, and those related basic communication and coping skills without which people are impeded from applying or being considered for employment.

3. ALBSU will be accountable to the Council of NIAE ('Council') which will itself be accountable to the Education Departments for its use of public funds as follows:—

- a. the employment of full-time and part-time staff to offer an advisory service to local education authorities ('LEAs') and others;
- b. the preparation or commissioning, and publication, of relevant teaching materials and other documents;
- c. the co-ordination and, where appropriate, the direct provision of relevant training where such provision is additional to that planned by LEAs;
- d. the undertaking, by means of the direct employment and assignment of staff or otherwise, of development projects in collaboration with LEAs and other relevant statutory or voluntary bodies, subject to the provision being additional to that planned by the relevant LEA or LEAs and to that LEA or LEAs agreeing, where relevant, to assume full responsibility for the provision or its continuation in appropriate form after funding by ALBSU ceases; and
- e. such other provision, subject to the approval of the Education Departments, as ALBSU may consider desirable.

4. ALBSU shall comply with the procedures of financial control set out in paragraphs 9 to 15 below.

5. ALBSU shall be expected to:—

- a. establish and maintain contacts with LEAs and other relevant public and voluntary providing and sponsoring bodies, encouraging them to develop and advising them on relevant provision;
- b. co-operate with public and voluntary bodies involved in the field, including the Education Departments and HM Inspectorate;
- c. advise the Education Departments on relevant matters, including subjects on which it might be appropriate to undertake research and development; and
- d. report to the Education Departments at the close of each financial year on the work of that year and the implications for the future.

The Management Committee

6. The management of ALBSU shall be undertaken by a committee, established by Council for the purpose, to which it shall delegate the functions set out in paragraphs 3 and 5 above under appropriate terms of reference, while retaining overall control of the operation of ALBSU. Council shall appoint members of the committee as follows:—

- a. 4 representing NIAE;
- b. 2 on the nomination of DES;
- c. 1 on the nomination of WOED;
- d. 1 on the nomination of the Manpower Services Commission;
- e. 1 on the nomination of the Home Office (Prison Department);
- f. 2 on the nomination of the local authority associations;
- g. 1 on the nomination of the Welsh Joint Education Committee;
- h. 2 representing voluntary bodies working in the relevant fields;
- i. 1 on the nomination of the National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education; and
- j. 1 on the nomination of the Association of Adult and Continuing Education.

In addition, Council shall, in consultation with the Education Departments appoint a Chairman of the committee.

7. The Director of NIAE shall be the committee's Secretary.

8. The Management Committee may co-opt not more than three additional members and may appoint such sub-committees and advisory groups as it considers necessary to help ALBSU fulfil its functions.

Finance

9. Grants paid by the Education Departments to NIAE will be earmarked specifically for the purposes set out in paragraphs 3 and 5 above and for the administrative expenses incurred by NIAE on account of ALBSU.

10. NIAE shall submit to the Education Departments estimate for the financial year 1980/81 (and, in due course, estimates for subsequent financial years) of how it proposes to disburse the grant under the following heads:—

- a. administrative expenses including accommodation, travel and subsistence, and the advisory service;
 - b. development projects;
 - c. preparation and provision of teaching material;
 - d. training; and
 - e. other expenditure.
11. Unless otherwise agreed by the Education Departments, a major proportion of the total Departmental grants available in each financial year shall be spent under head 10b above.
12. As soon as possible after the end of each financial year, NIAE shall provide the Education Departments with a certified Receipts and Payments account showing how the grant paid to it has been spent under the headings in paragraph 10 above.
13. NIAE shall require voluntary bodies to certify that grants paid to them have been spent in accordance with the conditions attached to their issue.
14. Grants will normally be paid to NIAE in monthly instalments equivalent to the amounts required to meet the expected payments in the ensuing month. Claims should be submitted in a form approved by the Education Departments. Within the total sum available each year, NIAE will be allowed to add a working balance of £5,000 at the end of each month and at the end of each financial year except 1982/83. Any grant which is unissued to NIAE at the end of the financial year will fall back to the Exchequer. The settlement of any commitments outstanding on the date when ALBSU ceases operation will be the subject of negotiation nearer the time between NIAE and the Education Departments.
15. The accounts and records of NIAE relating to the grant shall be open to examination by the Education Departments.

Staff

16. Staff of ALBSU both at headquarters and in the field shall be appointed by Council (which may delegate this function to the Management Committee or the principal officer of ALBSU as appropriate) on terms and conditions of service agreed between NIAE and the Education Departments.
17. The staffing complement of ALBSU's headquarters shall be at a level recommended by the Management Committee and agreed between NIAE and the Education Departments. The appointment of additional staff to NIAE to perform duties normally undertaken by existing staff engaged on the work of ALBSU shall be agreed between NIAE and the Education Departments.
18. The administrative expenses of ALBSU may include accommodation charges and (where appropriate) payments, at rates agreed with the Education Departments, to existing staff of NIAE who undertake additional duties in connection with the project.

Interpretation

19. Questions arising on the interpretation of any statement in this Memorandum shall be resolved by the Education Departments.

APPENDIX 2—MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE AND STAFF

Management Committee members

Chairman: Mr K Brooksbank

Secretary: Mr A K Stock

Department of Education and Science representatives:

Mrs C Chattaway

Dr J E MacDonald, HMI

Welsh Office representative:

Mr R E Jones, HMI

Association of County Councils representative:

Mrs E Mitchell (to 9.12.80)

Mrs M Marshall (from 9.12.80)

Association of Metropolitan Authorities representative:

Mr P R Clyne

Welsh Joint Education Committee representative:

Cllr J Williams

Home Office representative:

Mr A Baxendale

Manpower Services Commission representative:

Miss A Lewis (to 9.12.80)

Miss J Durning (from 9.12.80)

National Association of Teachers in Further and Higher Education representative:

Mrs N Whitbread

Association of Adult and Continuing Education representative:

Mr S MacDonald

National Institute of Adult Education representatives:

Mr N Barnes

Prof H A Jones

Mrs A Risman

Prof H C Wiltshire (Vice-Chairman)

Voluntary Organisation representatives:

Mr E Appleby

Mr J Taylor

Co-opted Members:

Mr R Ainscough (from 9.12.80)

Mr W Boaden (from 10.6.80 to 24.2.81)

Mr T Jupp (from 10.6.80)

Unit Staff:

Head of Unit:	Alan Wells
Field Consultants:	Judith Banbury (from 1.9.80)
	Elspeth Cardy
	Pamela Jones (from 1.9.80)
Administrator:	Pam Cocker
Office Manager:	Rosemary Carter
Clerical Assistants:	Joan Johnson
	Penny Lynch
	Betty White (part-time)
Finance Officer:	Tom Davies (part-time)

APPENDIX 3—CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE AND WORKING GROUPS

Consultative Committee members

Jim Anders, Principal, Frobisher AE Institute, ILEA
Janet Ash, Literacy Organiser, Gloucestershire
Joan Billington, Tutor-in-Charge, Merton
Pat Bonser, Organiser, Right to Read Programme, Birmingham
Carol Dalglish, County ABE Adviser, West Sussex
Pat East, Development and Training Co-ordinator, Lincolnshire
Rosemary Eggar, Director, Cambridge House Literacy Scheme
Sheila Leever, Senior Lecturer in Basic Education, Hertfordshire
Charles Mayo, Education Officer, IBA
Jim McCutcheon, Secretary, East Anglian Regional Advisory Council
Alan Oyston, Vice-Principal, Stockton and Billingham FE College
Arthur Pearson, Deputy Chief Education Officer, Prisons Department, Home Office
Alastair Robertson, Principal Training Adviser, MSC Special Programmes Division
Marilynne Snowden, Literacy Organiser, Walsall
Geoff Stanton, Head of Department of Communications & Liberal Studies, South East London College
Neil Tempest, Further Education Adviser, Liverpool
Gavin Thomas, Her Majesty's Inspectorate, Wales
Bob Webb, Adult Education Principal, Calderdale

Advisory Group members

Literacy group:	Janet Ash Rosemary Eggar Marilynne Snowden Jenny Brown, ABE Organiser, Hampshire Caroline Kewley, Tutor, Special Adult Learning Programmes, Bedfordshire Gay Lobley, Director, ILEA Literacy Schemes	} Committee members
Numeracy group:	Joan Billington Pat Bonser John Hobbs, Lecturer, North Hertfordshire College Anna Rossetti, Materials Development Officer, Basic Skills Unit Anne Stobart, ABE Development Officer, Liverpool	} Committee members
Basic Skills and Employability group:	Jim Anders Sheila Leever Alastair Robertson Bob Webb David Blezard, Head of Department of Liberal Education, Nelson and Colne FE College Martin Good, Director, Basic Skills Unit Pat White, Principal Careers Officer, ILEA	} Committee members

Working Group members

Energy Conservation Pack:

Jim Challis, Department of Energy
Judy Clark, Tutor, Cambridge House Literacy Scheme
Mike Golding, Department of Energy
Bill Hewitt, Department of Energy
Frances Isherwood, Tutor for Adult Basic Education, West Shropshire
Janet Swinney, Advisory Tutor for Adult Learning Difficulties, Essex

Literacy, Numeracy and the Young Trainee Handbook:

Rosemary Eggar, Director, Cambridge House Literacy Scheme
Terry Farmer, Co-ordinator, Community Action Project, Skegness
Pen Keyte, Materials Development Officer, Basic Skills Unit
Fred Lancaster, Training Officer, Youth Opportunities Centre, Avon
Marilynne Snowden, Adult Literacy Organiser, Walsall

Numeracy Workshops planning team:

Pat Bonser, Organiser, Right to Read Programme, Birmingham
Jay Derrick, Pre TOPS Organiser and Tutor, Friends Centre, Brighton
Frances Isherwood, Tutor for Adult Basic Education, West Shropshire
Margaret Moss, Co-ordinator for Numeracy, City of Reading
Margaret Newman, Lecturer and Co-ordinator of Maths Workshop, Southdown
Technical College, Waterlooville, Hampshire
Joan O'Hagan, Walk In Numeracy Centre, Hammersmith
Anna Rossetti, Materials Development Officer, Basic Skills Unit

APPENDIX 4—GUIDELINES FOR SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 In December 1979 the Secretary of State for Education and Science announced a continued central focus for adult literacy and related basic skills in the form of an Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Unit (ALBSU) to be established as an agency of the National Institute of Adult Education from 1 April 1980. This Unit, established initially for a three year period, will administer a grant made by the Department of Education and Science and the Welsh Education Department for developing within the general education service in England and Wales:

‘provision designed to improve the standards of proficiency for adults, whose first or second language is English, in the areas of literacy and numeracy, and those related basic communication and coping skills without which people are impeded from applying or being considered for employment.’

- 1.2 In addition to its main role as a central focus for adult literacy and basic skills, ALBSU is able to sponsor a limited number of Special Development Projects in collaboration with both statutory and voluntary bodies. In announcing these arrangements, the Secretary of State re-affirmed the general principle that local voluntary organisations should ordinarily look to local sources of finance for support.
- 1.3 In this respect ALBSU is able to undertake, by means of the direct employment and assignment of staff or otherwise, development projects in collaboration with LEAs and other relevant statutory and voluntary bodies, subject to the provision being additional to that planned by the relevant LEA or LEAs and to that LEA or those LEAs agreeing, where relevant, to assume full responsibility for the provision or its continuation in appropriate form, after funding by ALBSU ceases.
- 1.4. Proposals for sponsorship of Special Development Projects by ALBSU will need to demonstrate national or regional relevance and be innovatory or experimental, developing either out of existing work or breaking entirely new ground. Projects may be sponsored for varying periods although the maximum period of Unit sponsorship will be no more than two years. The Unit will also consider part or reducing sponsorship arrangements. For instance, ALBSU may be prepared to sponsor a project jointly with another sponsoring body or with the proposing organisation. It is also possible for ALBSU to agree to sponsor initially 100% of the costs involved in a project, 50% of the costs as the project proceeds and perhaps 25% prior to the work of the project being taken over by the organisation concerned.

2. Areas of concern

- 2.1. Although it is not possible to define comprehensively all of the areas of work projects may cover the Unit would wish to build on the work of the

Adult Literacy Unit by continuing to sponsor projects concerned with **adult literacy or immediately post-basic literacy**. In this respect the following areas of work may be relevant.

- : organisation, co-ordination and structure of provision
- : publicity, including recruitment and outreach work
- : liaison with other services
- : curriculum development including the production of specific learning materials and aids
- : provision to meet the needs of special groups within the community including the mentally handicapped, ex-offenders, etc
- : post basic literacy provision

2.2. All project submissions will need to be concerned with work within the broad remit of ALBSU and projects in the following areas, with adults whose first or second language is English, are of particular interest to the Unit in the immediate future and may, therefore, also be relevant.

- adult numeracy or basic maths
- associated basic skills related to work and training including work with the unemployed and basic skills work as part of vocational courses in colleges of further education and other institutions

Such work may also include associated basic skills related to the needs of special groups such as the mentally handicapped, ex-offenders etc.

3. Procedure

3.1. The Unit will require a written submission from the statutory or voluntary body concerned which may have been preceded by an initial letter of intent. There is at present, however, no time limit set on receiving and considering submissions. Submissions should be set out as follows:

- a. background information — including basic skills provision in the LEA or voluntary organisation concerned.
- b. aims and objectives — both short and long term.
- c. methodology.
- d. time scale — including details of the various phases of the project and the time allowed for each phase.
- e. programme of work — including details of the general strategy to be used in carrying out the project.
- f. support available — including details of the supervisory and financial resources to be made available by the submitting organisation, any staffing implications (including the possibility of secondment of existing staff) and details of the support available to continue the project when ALBSU sponsorship ceases.
- g. finance — details of the funds needed in each financial year (1 April — 31 March) of the project detailed under the following headings:
 - (i) Staff (including associated costs, NHI, superannuation)
 - (ii) Administration
 - (iii) Travel
 - (iv) Materials
 - (v) Total

- h. evaluation — including proposals for evaluation of the project by the organisation concerned.
- 3.2. The Unit will wish to discuss initial submissions with the organisation concerned and this may include, where necessary, a visit by an ALBSU Field Consultant or Head of Unit. A final submission for consideration by the Unit's Management Committee may follow these discussions. Submissions made by voluntary organisations should be copied by the organisation concerned to the appropriate LEA or LEAs.
- 3.3. Projects sponsored by ALBSU with statutory bodies will involve the Unit in appointing and assigning staff to work on the project in consultation with the body concerned. The staff of projects sponsored in collaboration with voluntary bodies will be employed directly by the organisation on terms and conditions agreed with the Unit.
- 3.4. Local authorities in receipt of sponsorship will be asked to act as ALBSU's paying agent and will receive funds in respect of the project quarterly in advance. Voluntary organisations will receive funds half-yearly in advance. Further advances will be dependent upon receipt by ALBSU of an account of expenditure relating to the project. The Unit would wish to receive interim reports on projects at least half-yearly.
4. **Evaluation**
- 4.1. Where relevant, organisations in receipt of Unit sponsorship may wish to establish a small consultative group with advisory functions, including ALBSU representation.
- 4.2. The Unit's Field Consultants will visit projects sponsored by the Unit to advise and monitor progress at regular intervals.
- 4.3. ALBSU will liaise and consult with HMI and in the case of voluntary organisation projects, where appropriate, with the relevant LEA/LEAs.
- 4.4. The Unit will wish to receive a final report on the work of each project sponsored as soon as possible after sponsorship ceases.

APPENDIX 5 — INCOME AND EXPENDITURE 1980/81

Income

Grant — Department of Education and Science	470,387	
Welsh Office	24,613	
		495,000
Publications Receipts		11,663
Deposit Interest Received		401
		507,064

Expenditure

Salaries, National Insurance and Super- annuation	76,042	
Fees	1,225	
Rent and Rates	25,266	
Office Redecoration including Furnishing, Fitting and Carpeting	17,772	
Cleaning	1,235	
Lighting and Heating	374	
Management Committee Expenses	1,175	
Consultative Committee Expenses	1,542	
Travelling and Conference Expenses	3,936	
Printing, Stationery, Advertising and Office Equipment	18,645	
Postage and Telephone	6,644	
General Insurance	79	
Audit and Accountancy	710	
Depreciation of Training Equipments	150	
Loss on Sale of Equipments	220	
Bank Charges	24	
Sundry Expenses	2,305	
Publication of Books	48,220	
Newsletters	31,701	
International Literacy Day Expenses	2,153	
Video Tapes	1,426	
ManPower Services Commission	521	
Training	96,919	
Special Projects	87,687	
Others:— ALSSF	8,000	
NFVLS	9,964	
Write First Time	2,083	
		20,047
		446,018
Surplus for the Year (returned to DES)		61,046